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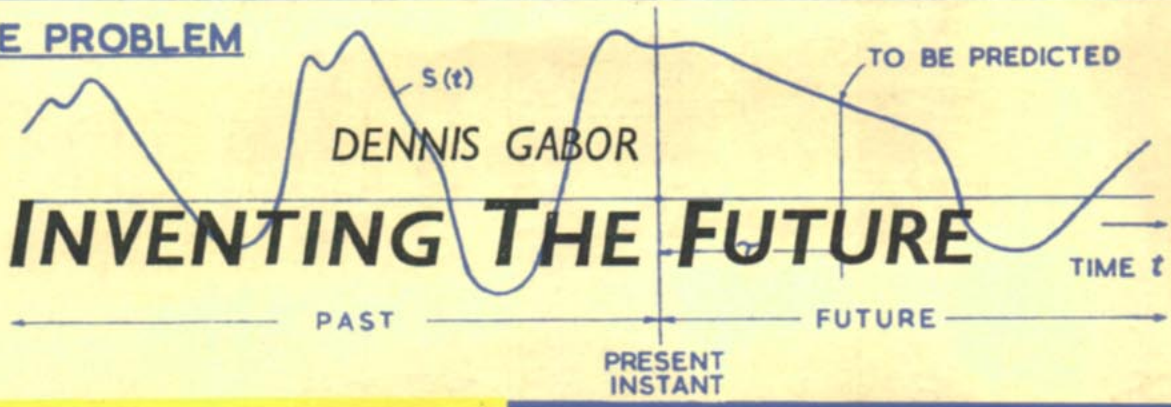

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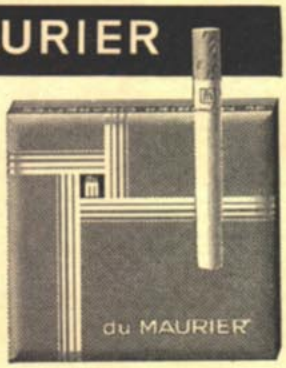

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Dennis Gabor

Inventing the Future

THERE exists no universally agreed definition either of applied electron physics or of electronics, and I find this vagueness very convenient, because in my own work I have never respected other limits than those of my own ignorance—sometimes not even these. This lack of sharp demarcation will enable me to range here over a very wide field. I will start near home with examples of my own work, and later on approach the question of the impact of electronic inventions and of inventions in general on our civilisation which is threatened by three great perils. The first peril is extermination by war, the second is crippling by over-population, and the third is a very frustrating sort of success; two tragedies and a tragi-comedy.

From our own work I have chosen three examples, which are of the nature of inventive developments, and which are in fields in which electronics already has or soon will have important consequences for civilisation. These fields are *Entertainment*, *Power*, and *Prediction*. All three are examples of work still in progress; they will be both reviews and previews.

MY FIRST EXAMPLE is from the field of entertainment, and it concerns our work on colour television, which has now been going on for quite a few years. In all industrial countries television is an enormous success. It is now far and away the most important medium of popular entertainment. On the other hand the history of colour television is the story of an uphill fight, as yet with no certainty of success. In the United States, the Radio Corporation of America started this venture almost ten years ago, and to date they have primed it with more capital than was ever spent for starting up the cinema, radio, and monochrome television put together. Yet to this day colour television is far from being popular there, and this has of course discouraged all other countries. I cannot go into all the reasons for this lack of success, because they are at least as much political as technical; I can talk only about the technical side of the matter.

In 1951, when I first became interested in colour television, the technical difficulties appeared so enormous that it appeared doubtful whether any firm would dare to put a colour set on the market. What appeared at first sight to be an almost impossibly difficult problem has been solved in the United States by admirable engineering and manufacturing skill, but at a price which the public, it appears, is not prepared to pay.

The *flat television tube*, which can be hung on the wall like a picture, contains a principle which makes it very suitable for colour television, but it has difficulties of its own. The idea came to me in a flash in 1952, but we are still working on the realisation. The principle is to produce the colours by a "parallax filter" with almost microscopic thickness, which is fixed on the viewing screen. The three-colour phosphors are deposited on the screen through the slits of the parallax screen, in a comparatively easy manufacturing process, which requires only a low grade of accuracy. The colours are then produced by three electron beams, one for each colour, which run parallel to the screen, in a vertical direction, but at different distances, and

DENNIS GABOR *is the newly-appointed Professor of Applied Electron Physics at the University of London. The experiments and research he mentions were conducted in the laboratories of the Department of Electrical Engineering there. Professor Gabor is a Fellow of the Royal Society.*

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when they have reached the writing position are thrown at the screen, very close together but at different angles, so that penetrating through the slits of the parallax screen each beam excites its own strip of coloured phosphor. In the flat tube high-grade manufacturing accuracy is avoided at the cost of a complicated electron-optical problem.

In brief, the problem is to make three colour-beams run vertically, at closely controlled distances, parallel to the screen, sweep these horizontally, in the rhythm of the line scan, and vertically, by a common electric sweep-wave, in the rhythm of the frame scan. Moreover, the whole electron optics must be folded together into a minimum of space. This is done by launching the three beams from *one* gun vertically downwards, deflecting them horizontally, by a pair of deflecting plates, and then turning the whole complex of rays into a second vertical plane, by an electron-optical organ which is called a "reversing lens." This is evidently a difficult electron-optical problem, and it took my only collaborator at that time, Dr. Peter Stuart, three years of hard work before it was satisfactorily solved. It took us another year before we could make the tube "scan itself," that is to say producing the vertical sweep-field by the action of the electron beam itself. And when at last we had produced the first self-scanning tube, it was too complicated and expensive. We are still working on a simpler realisation, which we hope will lend itself to mass manufacture.

Looking back on this development which is now going into its sixth year, it would not be true to say that I would not have undertaken it if I had known how difficult it would be. Difficulties have always attracted rather than repelled me. But had I known that, by the time our work showed reasonable progress, both in this country and in the United States one industrial firm after the other would shut down its television tube factory and its television tube research laboratory, and that colour television would become almost a bogey-word, I do not believe that I would have started it.

At the present moment it is thinkable, though not probable, that colour television, like the three-dimensional film, will be something that flashed on the scene for a brief moment, to disappear again. A few years ago this was not even thinkable. But time is almost certainly on the side of colour television. Assuming normal further development of our industrial civilisation, what appears to-day as a desirable luxury gadget, but rather too expensive, may well become a necessity for the national economy—to make the wheels go round.

A SECOND example. Until quite recently it appeared that electronics had nothing to do with power production; as a part of "light" electrical engineering it was clearly separated from the "heavy" branch. The advent of nuclear power did not change this position. Nuclear fission plants raised immense, challenging problems in metallurgy, in mechanical and even in civil engineering, but electrical engineering started in the orthodox way at the turbine shaft, and electronics came in only for some problems of measurement and control.

This has been changed recently by the possibility of thermo-electric generators, and by the even more exciting glimpse of unlimited power from the seas by thermonuclear fusion. In the long run this will be absolutely vital if an industrial civilisation of several thousand million people is to survive on this Earth. No wonder that this country, the U.S., and the Soviet Union are now devoting a quite appreciable part of their scientific manpower to research on thermonuclear fusion.

Fusion belongs of course very much to the domain of the applied electron physicist, because, as everybody knows, it requires temperatures of several hundred million degrees, and at such temperatures matter is in the "plasma" state, as in electric discharges, and electric discharges are the only means for reaching such temperatures. For somebody like myself, who has worked on and off for over thirty years on plasma problems, this was a most wonderful opportunity to come back to them. It was also a very unexpected opportunity, because gas discharge devices, such as mercury rectifiers, are rapidly losing their technical importance with the advent of solid-state devices. When in 1954, with Drs. Ash and Dracott, I concluded six years' research on the elucidation of a gas discharge phenomenon ("Langmuir's Paradox") which had remained unexplained for almost thirty years, I was quite convinced that I had finished with the plasma for ever.

Two years ago, when we again started work on plasma problems, we had in addition to our usual shortage of cash, space, and manpower the handicap that fusion was still completely classified as secret. We had to keep, therefore, at a

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respectful distance from the main problem. I had also to promise that I would not blow up the Imperial College with a deuteron explosion. We started, therefore, on high temperature arcs, which was sufficiently far from the heart of the matter and not classified.

An electric arc is naturally rather hot, but to make it *very* hot is not an easy matter. There exists a law, known as Steenbeck's Principle, which states that an arc is not hotter than it can help being. This anthropomorphistic language comes easily to those who have worked much with gas discharges. They are used to looking at an electric discharge as something like a living being, which *wants* to keep alive. In order to keep alive it must dissipate energy, but Steenbeck's Principle states that the arc will dissipate energy only at the minimum rate necessary for its maintenance. Therefore if we want to make an arc get very hot, we must make life difficult for it; on the other hand we must take care that it is not killed.

In our experiments we have made the arc tough and almost unkillable by feeding it with the energy stored up in a large choke, and we make life difficult for it by forcing it to traverse a strong magnetic field. But if one tries this trick on an arc, one will soon find that the arc has a defence mechanism ready for keeping cool. This is the so-called Hall-field, an electric field which will establish itself in an arc channel at right angles to the channel and to the magnetic field. Its effect is that the electrons will flow through the channel almost as if there were no magnetic field at all. Thus if we want the magnetic field to have an effect, we must use a further trick. This trick is that we are forcing the arc, which has "naturally" a filamentary shape, to assume the shape of a disc, with converging currents.

While the long preparations for these experiments were carried out, the subject of fusion became declassified, and we could dare to take a short step nearer to its core. When I looked into the theory of the multi-electrode arc, it struck me that it had a feature which may well be more interesting than the temperature which it produces. This is the presence of a very large circulating current in the discharge. The theory shows that in the arc at atmosphere pressure it may be perhaps 10 times the radial current, but at low pressures it may be 100 times larger. Such a current, closed in itself, is a semi-stable structure, and it may be possible to shoot it out of the discharge, which it may survive for some time. A piece of plasma which is shot out of a discharge is known as a "plasmoid." The American physicist W. H. Bostick first produced plasmoids some years ago, by discharging a condenser in a high vacuum. Such vacuum arcs, living only on the gas liberated by the electrodes, can carry currents of many thousand amperes, and they blow themselves out by their own magnetic field. Bostick thus obtained little sticks of plasma, which were blown out with velocities up to 10 times Sputnik-speed. It struck me that we have a possibility of producing toroidal plasmoids, by shooting out the plasma carrying the circulating current. The interest of our experiments, if any, is in the fact that in ZETA and in the U.S. devices, the circulating discharge is produced in a toroidal space completely enclosed from all sides, while we produce it in an open structure, so that we can shoot out the plasmoid axially.

I want to emphasise that even the experiments are still a *very* long way from the core of the fusion problem. So far the largest speeds achieved are a few 10^7 cm/sec. If it were possible to achieve a few 10^8 cm/sec. one could think of using plasmoids for heating a nuclear furnace. It would be like stoking a furnace with red-hot bullets, which go white-hot on impact. This may be perhaps one way towards thermonuclear power, but probably a very hard way.

For my part, the interest of these experiments was that they have led me to more advanced ideas, of which it would be very premature to talk. I can say only that personally I have come to the conviction that the fusion problem can and will be solved, but also that the thermonuclear generators of the future will have to be the biggest and boldest machines ever devised.

The Prediction Box

The third example of our research activities concerns a special line of computers. It belongs to electronics rather than to electron physics, because its basic elements are electronic *devices*, not electrons or ions. The computer in question is one of the great family of *intelligent machines* whose emergence is, I believe, one of the most significant features of the mid-20th century. To avoid hurting philosophical feelings I want to say at once that I am using the term "intelligent machines" merely as an abbreviation for "artefacts simulating actions which in living beings we would consider as manifestations of

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intelligence." That these machines are electronic may be accidental; it so happens that we have first learned to carry out by electronic means those processes which in the animal nervous system are performed by chemical and physico-chemical mechanisms. For simplicity of explanation I will introduce our machine as a predictor, though it has more general applications. The sort of prediction of which I want to talk has nothing to do with the naïve determinism of Laplace. We do not want to predict processes which run down regularly like clockwork, but statistical processes, known by the name of "stochastic processes," which are only partly regular. Examples of such processes are sea waves (the real ones, not the ones in text-books), the weather, the prices on the Stock Exchange. I want to explain the problem with the aid of Fig. 1, in a greatly simplified language.

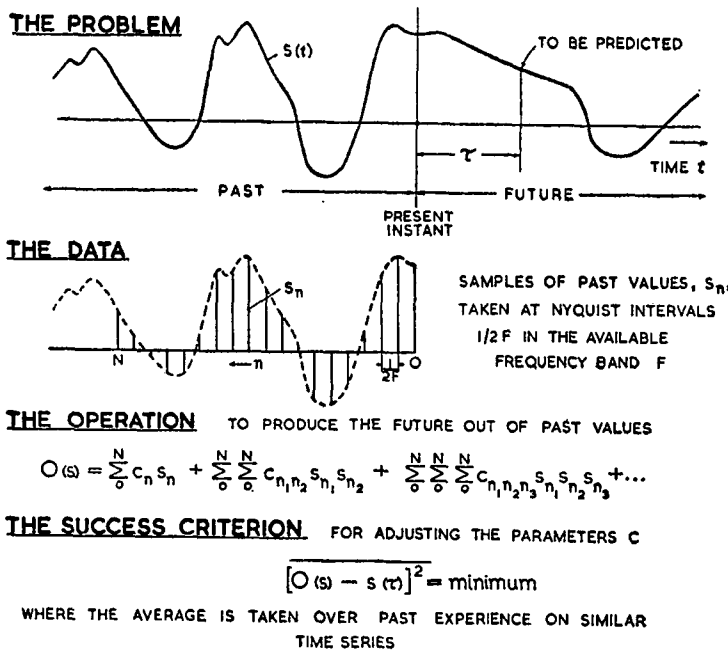
We take a single stochastic variable, which can be, for instance, the amplitudes of sea waves, or almost anything else. We know its past values up to the present moment, and we want to predict its future values some time τ in advance. For this we have at our disposal first, the past values, second, a large amount of information on the statistical habits of the process, and third, some auxiliary or "side information" on parameters influencing the process.

As regards the past values, we can introduce a great simplification of the problem if we take into consideration that every physical instrument or method of observation which gives us these values has a *finite waveband*. One can then show that the independent values in the series are discrete, there is only one independent datum in an interval of $1/2F$ if F is the waveband. These *samples* are the only values of the past on which we must base the prediction. They are called s_n, and are numbered backwards from the present instant 0 to some maximum.

We can now at once write down a perfectly general formula for the prediction of a future value from these past samples. For good reasons we have chosen an algebraic polynomial. *Any* single-valued function of the data can be approximated beyond any limit by this form, provided that we make the numbers of terms sufficiently large. This polynomial expression contains the products of the samples, in all possible combinations, with coefficients c which have to be determined. The products are ordered in terms of first, second, etc., order, according to the number of factors in the product. The first term represents linear prediction, and this is the only one which has so far received satisfactory mathematical treatment by Kolmogoroff and by Wiener.

We must give a precise meaning to "approximating the future as well as possible." Again for good reasons, we choose the criterion of *least mean square error*. This means that on the average the squared difference between the true and the predicted value must be as small as possible.

We now have a definite mathematical problem, but if we went about it in the ordinary way, by writing down the explicit equations for the unknown coefficients c and solving them, it would be of formidable complexity. Fortunately there is an easier way out, one which has been practised by living beings from time immemorial. We have only to take a leaf out of the book of Nature: Let us make a computer, complex enough to produce the polynomial O(s) with a great number


THE PROBLEM
S(t)
TO BE PREDICTED
τ
TIME t
PAST
FUTURE
PRESENT INSTANT
THE DATA
s_n
N
n
O
2F
SAMPLES OF PAST VALUES, s_n, TAKEN AT NYQUIST INTERVALS 1/2F IN THE AVAILABLE FREQUENCY BAND F
THE OPERATION TO PRODUCE THE FUTURE OUT OF PAST VALUES
$O(s) = \sum_0^N c_n s_n + \sum_0^N \sum_0^N c_{n_1 n_2} s_{n_1} s_{n_2} + \sum_0^N \sum_0^N \sum_0^N c_{n_1 n_2 n_3} s_{n_1} s_{n_2} s_{n_3} + \ldots$
THE SUCCESS CRITERION FOR ADJUSTING THE PARAMETERS C
$\overline{[O(s) - s(\tau)]^2} = \text{minimum}$
WHERE THE AVERAGE IS TAKEN OVER PAST EXPERIENCE ON SIMILAR TIME SERIES

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of terms with undetermined values of the co-efficients c and *make it learn its job by experience.*[1]

The predictor itself is a box, with say a hundred knobs which can be adjusted, each knob corresponding to one of the coefficients c in the polynomial. The rest is the teaching apparatus or trainer. This consists, first, of a tape recorder with a long sample of the statistical process of the kind which we want to predict. The recorder is of a special type, in which 18 past samples can be read out simultaneously, by staggered magnetic heads. These values are fed into the computer, which then computes from these some trial value. In order to compare this with the true value which ought to be predicted, there is one head which is advanced by τ, and reads it out directly. The trial value and the true value are fed into a comparator, which calculates the success criterion, which is the squared difference of these two values, averaged over the whole run of the teaching tape. The result of the calculation is fed into an adjustor, which will change the adjustment or one or several of the knobs in such a way that the next run will produce a better result, and so on.

At this point you may rightly ask how we can be sure that the predictor will improve from run to run? This is where the advantage of the special mathematical form comes in which we have chosen with some cunning. The mean square error as a function of the coefficients c is an elliptic paraboloid, in as many dimensions as there are coefficients. The point is that such a paraboloid always has a minimum, and only one! Hence *any* rule which tells the machine to descend steadily will result in the end in as close an approach as we like. There exist several strategies for achieving this, the most famous is the "relaxation strategy" of Sir Richard Southwell. We use a variant of this, adjusting always one knob at a time. To speed up the process the comparator, which calculates the success criterion, is triplicated, so that in every run we determine the mean square error for *three* different values of one of the co-efficients c. With the mathematical form which we have chosen, the mean square error as function of any one of the c will be always a parabola, and this is determined by three of its points. We have a computer which then calculates right away how we have to set this knob for optimum result, the others remaining unchanged. The machine then goes in turn repeatedly over all the knobs, until it has come as near to the minimum as does not matter. With 100 knobs this might take 5,000 runs in the worst case, but this does not matter as the machine has unlimited patience. We had of course to take special precautions lest the tape might wear out before the patience of the machine is exhausted!

Our predictor is not fully finished, but now that the multiplier problem is solved—by the Wilby multiplier, a baffling new invention which, I feel certain, can be made to perform as many as 100,000 multiplications per second—I can talk of it with full confidence, because electronic circuits *must work*. One always gets them to work in the end as one wants, which is very different from electron-optics, let alone plasma work.

I have introduced this device as "a predictor," but in fact it is far more a universal learning machine. It will be possible to use it as a filter, to separate noise from message, and as a recogniser, without any change of its structure, merely by giving it a different training course. Professor Arnold Tustin has suggested a further application, of which I had not thought before. There exist complicated systems, which one can observe but with which one must not interfere, such as for instance large petrol refineries, or the British economic system. In this case one can take records of the observed inputs and outputs, and feed them into the machine with the instruction: "Produce the second out of the first!" The machine will then make itself into a functional model of the system to be studied; in other words it can be used as a *universal simulator*.

It must be admitted that such a machine has some claim to be called "intelligent." There is many a game in which it can beat humans, for the simple reason that it has not only unlimited patience and a precise, quantitative memory, but also because it is free from illusions. Give a human being three or more interdependent knobs, and

[1] One might ask why we do not give this problem to one of the giant universal digital computers, such as the IBM 704 or 709? In fact these machines are so universal that one could set them up to solve our problem, but not faster than our specialised machine (which can perform 400,000 multiplications per second), and the rental of these machines for long times is rather prohibitive. Besides, a university institute must turn out able young research workers as well as research results, and training them as programmers of giant machines is a poor sort of training.

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let him try to get an optimum, for instance in a colour television picture. Only tiredness will prevent him from running endlessly in circles.

On the other hand the intelligence of the machine is certainly less than scientific. It may be able for instance to predict the trajectories of balls, as a tennis player learns to predict them by sheer experience, but it will never formulate the laws of dynamics. Like all other machines constructed to date, its activities are complicated, but always on the same logical level. A machine like this will never produce an abstraction.

Human Complexity

ADMITTEDLY, all machines constructed to date are at best highly able executives, powered only by the intelligence of the designer. They are "idiot savants," which for long chains of deductive arithmetical operations will run circles around the best humans, but are incapable of abstractions and inductions. They cannot, as intelligent living beings do, organise themselves in correspondence with a wide variety of situations, ordering their experiences in an economical way, and building up their own rules for reacting to new situations on the basis of past associations. Will this always be so? There is a strong revulsion in many people against admitting the possibility of machines *behaving* like human beings, they feel that this would be equal to admitting that "Man *is* a machine." Much of this feeling is an understandable reaction against the cocksureness of the early materialists, like La Mettrie, who bluntly asserted that "Man is nothing but a machine." On logical grounds the feeling is quite unjustified, because "Man is a machine" is not a verifiable statement: it is a meaningless noise, like the question "Can machines think?" But feelings are not logical, nor can they be eliminated by logical argument. "Man is a machine," though logically meaningless, expresses a *valuation*. It was a revoltingly low valuation of Man at the time when clockworks and the primitive automata of Vaucanson were the most complicated machines in existence, it is rather different to-day, when electronic computers can carry out jobs in a split second which would take months for trained humans, and it will be very different in the future.

Probably the most important factor in our changed attitude to machines is our new view of complexity. Scientists, even more than other people, decline to be impressed by "mere size." But if increasing size goes parallel with increasing complexity, at higher levels of complication entirely new phenomena can emerge. Biologists may have felt this for a long time, but to the exact scientist it was revealed for the first time by the great mathematician, the late John von Neumann, when he demonstrated that self-reproducing machines must have very many elements, of the order of 100,000 and that evolution can take place only beyond a certain level of complexity.

Another factor is the recognition that the most complicated logical processes can be carried out by a succession of a few types of simple operations, which can be easily mechanised. In this respect it is very interesting, and close to my main theme, to observe the minor revolution which has taken place in neurophysiology since mathematicians, physicists, and electronic engineers took an interest in it. To put it briefly, into what used to be a classical field of pure research they have introduced *a spirit of invention*. Certain results were grabbed from the hand of the somewhat reluctant neurophysiologist and ruthlessly formulated into simple principles to serve as a basis for inventing models. These principles are briefly as follows: (1) There exists only a limited class of neurons, and these differ only in the number and in the thresholds of their stimulating and inhibitory synapses. (2) Any learning or habituation is nothing but a change of thresholds.

These are the bold and perhaps over-simplified working hypotheses of the mathematicians and electronic engineers which have been more or less accepted by the "tame" neurophysiologists who co-operate with them. They have momentous consequences. Chief of these is, that as the same type of neuron, placed *anywhere* in the nervous system, will show exactly the same behaviour and will fire or not under the same conditions of stimulation, the *meaning* of a signal (of a burst or volley, or its absence) is *entirely determined by its location*, that is to say by the connection of the neuron with others, and ultimately with the sensory and effector organs.

If this working hypothesis is right, it means that unless we open up the brain we cannot put any concept into it except by the "legitimate channels," *via* the sensory organs. There is no possibility of evoking a concept by "specific signals" or by "resonance," as has been often imagined in the past. This in turn means that

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there can be no thought-transference or extra-sensory perception.

This deduction from an unproved set of working hypotheses will not, of course, impress the surprisingly large number of people who *want* to believe in "ESP." Personally I think that to make room for ESP in brain models at the present stage would be about as wise as it would have been to ask Newton to make allowance in his law of gravity for levitation.

It might appear that if the brain is as simple as that, nothing can prevent us from making right away an attempt at constructing an artificial brain. But there are formidable quantitative obstacles in the way. First, the human brain contains some 10^{10} neurons, rather more than there are electronic valves in the world to-day. But second, the rather naïve attempts made so far at constructing brains are so uneconomical, that they would exhaust this formidable number just by the action of recognising the patterns, black or white, on a 6×6 chess board. Not until we have made a further, enormous step in the miniaturising of the logical components (which might well take us outside electronics) and not until we have learned to imitate *hierarchical thinking*, can we even dream of producing anything like a universal artificial brain, capable of competing with the human brain, which is a miracle of economical organisation. There is good reason to believe that the brains of Newton or of Mozart contained only about the same number of neurons as the brain of a moron. On the basis of our present knowledge with 10^{10} relais we could not even construct a moron.

The Mechanisation of Genius

So far, the influence of electronic inventions on civilisation was, on the whole, beneficial. The reproductive inventions, high-fidelity sound-recording, radio, and television have put the masterpieces of music and of the stage within everybody's reach, of course, mixed with advertisements and with entertainment. I have no apology to offer for advertisements; but as regards entertainment, it was J. B. Priestley who asked whether the cinema was "any worse than the cartwheel around the village idiot's neck as a Sunday entertainment?"

It is also interesting and comforting to observe that the HI-FI gramophone and the radio, these highly democratic inventions, have brought a triumph to the aristocratic principle, that nothing is worth doing unless it is done supremely well. To-day there is no *need* for anybody to play the piano who plays it less well than Myra Hess. (Playing the piano for your own pleasure is quite another matter, but this has little to do with the level of artistic achievement of the epoch. The Medicis were no lesser judges of art for never touching a paint-brush.)

There is even a possibility that in music the intermediary between the composer and his public will be cut out altogether. Great composers need not be great performers on any instrument, nor need they be accomplished conductors, but we must concede that the composer is the best judge of how his work ought to be performed. Several years ago the engineers of the Radio Corporation of America constructed a wonderful musical instrument which enables a single man to put together, at leisure, any orchestral music, instrument by instrument, without being able to play a single one, and to correct it as often as he likes, until it sounds perfect to him. To my knowledge no composer has tried his hand on it, but if ever there will be a new Beethoven (and not deaf), posterity may be able to hear his own interpretation of his symphonies, without any intermediaries. This would be a further and final triumph of the aristocratic principle—if we are agreed that the creative artist ranks above the interpreter, be he a Bruno Walter or a Toscanini.

Will the machine go a step further and cut out also the creative artist? Is all this talk about composing symphonies[2] or writing sonnets just science fiction or is it a serious forecast of things to come?

My answer is that I sincerely hope that machines *will* never replace the creative artist, but in good conscience I cannot say that they never *could*. The brilliant researches of one modern school of mathematicians and logicians[3] have proved that it is not possible to construct

[2] This ruthless idea is not as modern as one might think. The first composing machine, the *Componium*, was built in 1824 by Winckler and is preserved in Brussels. Other more recent ruthless suggestions are the Electronic Manager, the Electronic Surgeon, and the Electronic Judge. (Cf. the *Proceedings of the Symposium on the Mechanisation of Thought Processes*, organised by A. M. Uttley at the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, 24 November, 1958.) Why do these people never suggest the Electronic Research Worker?

[3] Cf. M. Davis, *Computability and Unsolvability* (McGraw-Hill, 1958).

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deterministic machines to solve a class of mathematical problems which have been quite successfully tackled by human brains, and this suggests that the same applies to artistic creations. On the other hand there is strong evidence that a machine which embodies *random* elements, can in every respect simulate the human mind. This is the old idea of "monkeys on typewriters," but with an important difference. By embodying all the deterministic knowledge in the machine (such as of the English language, of the rules of logic, of harmony and melody) and by building in an enormous store of previous experience which allows preselecting elements likely to succeed, the probability space can be enormously restricted. Moreover (perhaps by teaching the machine by feedback what is agreeable to the human public and what is not) the machine can be its own critic and censor. I believe, though, that such a machine will be hardly less complicated than the human brain, and therefore there is some hope that it will never be built. On the other hand I should welcome simpler machines, such as Orwell's "versifier" which produces popular lyrics "untouched by human brains" for debunking all that is mechanical and bogus in what passes by the name of art.

I AM afraid though that one cannot exclude the possibility of another, much more sinister short circuit between invention and the public, not electronic but chemical. Primitive drugs such as alcohol and opium have existed since time immemorial, and they were beneficial in helping human beings to bear their miseries. Fortunately, one can say, they were ruinous when taken in excess for health or stamina, and society has kept them within bounds. But there is no reason why this should always be so. It is not unthinkable, even likely, that drugs will be discovered which give to simple, average people the happiness of the creative artist, and beyond this, the indescribable bliss of the ecstatic saint,[4] and which will not be ruinous to health, or even to willpower. A human society in possession of such a drug would not necessarily degenerate, nor need it be overrun by barbarians, but unless it decides by an act of will that it prefers to stay sober, it will not produce any more art. If this happened, I am glad that electronics will be innocent of it.

I believe that of all electronic inventions now within viewing distance predictors are likely to have the greatest influence on civilisation. In a well-ordered society the highest, the most respected, and the most responsible posts go, or at least ought to go, to men who have the gift of making the right decisions on the basis of uncertain data, by a partly reasoning, partly instinctive foresight of the future. A false and irresponsible predicter like Hitler can ruin a civilisation; in fact we have now reached the stage when we cannot afford another Hitler. At first sight it is a relief to think that in the near future objective electronic predictors may assist the statesmen. But a warning must be uttered, not to attach undue hopes to mechanical predictors when applied to human affairs. A predictor, whether man or machine, can remain objective only so long as its forecasts will not influence the processes which they predict. Weather forecasting is of this type; forecasting economic trends is quite another matter. A Financial Editor takes an active part in shaping the future. Once the forecasts are communicated to men who influence affairs, the process becomes a complicated "Neumann-Morgenstern game" between them and the predictor. To avoid complicating matters, let us just consider the case that a predictor has built up such a high reputation of being always right, that men will blindly follow its forecasts. The machine, being a learning machine, will soon notice that everything it says goes, and from that moment on there is no guarantee against its going astray. Absolute power will corrupt not only men but also machines! Let us hope that these things will be better understood before social predictors become important.

A Golden Age?

AFTER this excursion into a hypothetical future I want to step back into the present, and ask the question "Do we need inventors?" Or, more precisely does *this country* need inventors? Let me for a moment

[4] It appears that opium produces the "sensations of a poet" (but it ruined Coleridge), and that mescalin can give "a vividness of vision of which only great painters are capable," as eloquently witnessed by Aldous Huxley (*Doors of Perception*, 1957). What is the "use" of great painting if the sight of "light playing on a garden chair" or even the sight of "the folds of one's trousers" can produce a palpitating pleasure which no Rembrandt can give to the sober eye?

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play the part of the *advocatus diaboli*, and plead the case against inventors. I could ask, for instance: "Does it make any difference that polythene was invented in this country, and nylon in the United States?" There is now no shortage of either polythene or nylon in Britain or in the U.S. or in any industrial country which has not invented either of them. Or does it matter that transistors were invented in the U.S.? The whole know-how has come to this country, for less than the cost of research, and the moderate royalties will have to be anyway invested in Britain. I have quoted one cautionary tale, of colour television, at the beginning, and I could add, from my own experience, some even more frightening cases in which invention and initiative did *not* pay. Perhaps I had better stop, or I might find too good arguments. But I feel sure, that to all these arguments there will be one reply. "We want British inventors, because we do not want to become a second-rate country, and because we want to be in nobody's debt for ideas and inventions!" I believe that such a proud resolve is worth more than all the economic arguments, even if it springs from roots which are instinctive rather than rational.

If we agree about this, what must we do to help inventors? In a country so richly endowed with inventive talent as Britain, there is no need for any artificial breeding and nursing, but I believe that it is of great importance to eliminate some of the obstacles, external and internal.

Once upon a time Britain had no shortage of inventors. In books like *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles[5] we read with a shudder of these maniacs, who worked on relentlessly with their wives in rags, their children crying with hunger, who were later persecuted by irate workmen, and when their invention was finally successful, cheated by manufacturers who stole their inventions in the hope that they could not go to court. In the end there is the horrible refrain: "died in extreme poverty." We now hear that all this belongs to the past; "the inventor starving in a garret has been replaced by the scientist in the research laboratory." But it is just this very widespread modern belief which is a subtle danger to invention, and it will be worth considering it in a little detail.

There is, of course, some truth in it. One of the greatest of inventors, the late Irving Langmuir, worked all his life in almost monastic happiness in the Research Laboratory of the General Electric Co., producing inventions which brought millions to his company, and scientific discoveries which brought him the Nobel Prize. But not all inventors have this happy disposition. Three of the greatest, Rudolf Diesel, W. H. Carothers (the inventor of nylon and other important high polymers), and Edwin Armstrong (the inventor of the superheterodyne, of super-regeneration, and of frequency modulation), ended their highly useful and successful lives by suicide—all three because of imaginary worries. Even if they do not risk their own money, the responsibility for keeping their promises weighs heavily on highly-strung and sensitive individuals. Shall we then keep them out of danger, for their own health, by changing the inventor into a scientist, working in a research laboratory? Though the inventor and the scientist often represent very different psychological types, this metamorphosis can be effected, without any crude pressure, just by the climate of opinion.

Invention and Research

I BELIEVE that Rutherford is a good example of a highly gifted individual who could have been equally great as an inventor and as a scientist. When the young New Zealander came to this country, he brought with him an invention, and not a bad one either; the magnetic detector of radio waves. If he had not gone in 1896 to Cambridge, England, but say to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I have not the slightest doubt that he, and not Valdemar Poulsen, would have become the inventor of magnetic sound recording.[6] As it was, in his whole wonderful scientific life Rutherford never made another invention, and became the epitome of a pure research worker.

Rutherford's is certainly a rather exceptional case, because few inventors have this gift of curiosity, that appetite for scientific truth of which he had a somewhat old-fashioned, unsophisticated, but all the more vivid conception. Most inventors would make only average

[5] A new edition of this classic has recently appeared, with an introduction by Asa Briggs (John Murray, London, 1959).

[6] I have heard from Sir Ernest Marsden, F.R.S., that Rutherford actually had the idea, and received encouragement from J. J. Thomson, but let it drop because the development promised to be lengthy and expensive, and undoubtedly also because by that time he had lost interest in inventions.

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research workers, some even poor ones, but I have little doubt that in a climate of opinion which favours research they would settle down quite happily, and forget running after dreams.

But what is good for the individual is not necessarily the best for society. Will great research laboratories, staffed by devoted *research-minded* workers, really pour out automatically a stream of worthwhile inventions? I am afraid this is just one of the comfortable beliefs of modern "Organisation Man."[7] Thanks to recent researches,[8] one can give a fairly quantitative appraisal. From a careful investigation into the history of 60 important modern inventions, it appears that not less than 33 are the work of individual or independent inventors, 6 are borderline cases, and only 22 come from research laboratories, of which 15 are chemical inventions.[9] It may be noted that electronic research laboratories have a very good record, because modern television is largely the work of excellent inventors employed by large firms, such as Westinghouse, R.C.A., E.M.I., and Marconi's, whereas the work of individual inventors, such as J. L. Baird and D. v. Mihalyi came to a dead end. Also, one of the most outstanding modern inventions, the transistor, is the work of the exceptional team of the three Nobel Prize winners, Shockley, Bardeen, and Brattain, in the Bell Telephone Laboratories.

This might look like a sufficient vindication of the modern institution of great industrial or national research laboratories, in spite of the more than 50 per cent contribution of the small minority of individual, independent inventors, but on closer look it is only a justification of those institutions which know *how to employ and to stimulate inventors*. Research is a modern hurrah-word, which exploits the immense prestige of science. Even the institutions which deal exclusively with inventions cannot do without it; they call themselves Research Foundations in the U.S., and in this country, we have the National Research Development Corporation—as if invention were nothing but the development of research results! There is no objection against a name, so long as we do not forget what it covers. But to suggest that television is a result of research into photo-emitters and electron optics, or that the transistor is the result of research in semi-conductors is plainly misleading. V. K. Zworykin, the principal originator of electronic television, is a true inventor, a descendant of the pure line of the heroes of Smiles, and so is Shockley. The difference is, of course, that they are not self-taught mechanics, but fully-trained scientists. The other difference, that they have preferred to work for large corporations instead of as free-lances (though Shockley has now changed his mind) is not very profound. Even the inventors of old times valued achievement more than money[10] and in modern times, when inventions are still uncertain but income tax is dead certain, money is even less important. Inventors can fling themselves heart and soul into their vocation, whether they are free-lances or employees, even too much so, as witnessed by the tragic case of W. H. Carothers of Du Pont's.

Once a great invention is made, legend rapidly grows around it, and makes of it a result of patient research and observation—forgetting only the guiding vision and the motive power! The transistor is a particularly good nucleus for a legend, because it was accompanied by so much brilliant research. But the fact is that Shockley did not set out to carry on research in semiconductors; he set out to invent a solid-state amplifier.

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[7] William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organisation Man* (1956). Other comfortable beliefs of Organisation Man are that "Ideas come from the group, not from individuals"; that "creative leadership is a staff function"; that decisions ought to be made in committees only; and that "a man who gets ulcers probably shouldn't be in business anyway."

[8] John Jewkes, David Sawers, and Richard Stillerman, *The Sources of Invention* (Macmillan, London, 1958).

[9] One case, admittedly not typical, deserves to be singled out, because it gives a somewhat unexpected answer to the question, "Is invention the result of research?" This is the story of the Kodachrome colour process, which was invented by two young musicians, Leo Godowski and Leopold Mannes, who were so enthusiastic about it that they went on with their experiments during their concert tours, in hotel rooms. Later, Dr. C. E. K. Mees, F.R.S., the famous Director of Research of the Eastman Kodak Co., himself a distinguished inventor, invited them to join his laboratories with salaries, royalties, and excellent laboratory facilities, where it took another ten years to make Kodachrome commercial. (The most remarkable feature of this case is that the two outsiders worked on an orthodox chemical basis originating from the scientific work of Fischer and Siegrist, 1910–14, on dye-couplers, which was open to all dye-chemists.)

[10] Think of the noble words of Charles Goodyear, written at the time when he was imprisoned for debt, "Only when someone sows and no one reaps is there truly reason for despair."

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Utopia?

In the invention-stimulating atmosphere of the United States (or of the Soviet Union) there is probably no need to utter such warnings. But in this country, where the prestige of pure research is so immense, it will be as well to avoid confusion of ideas and to protect the inventor from extinction. The stimulation must start early, through science teachers, newspapers, radio, television, and periodicals accessible to young people. Fortunately, there is no shortage in this country for gifted popularisers of science, with the right attitude to inventions. The universities can do their share by teaching the history of technology, and generally, by teaching science not as a *post facto* logical reconstruction, but as a succession of ideas, with their historical background, giving due recognition to their originators.

But the universities can make a more important contribution. It is a plain fact that very few of the modern electronic devices were invented by people trained as electrical engineers. The majority were invented by physicists, some by mathematicians, one by an architect. This is no reflection on the intelligence of electrical engineering students. What can you expect of the man who has been taught the *tools of his trade* in a situation in which the scientific background of electronic inventions extends from symbolic logic to quantum physics? I believe that the best we can do is to advise young people who show exceptional early promise and who want to become inventors, to take up electrical engineering not directly, but as a postgraduate study and to study for the first three years nothing but mathematics and physics.[11] These are the years in which the mind is most receptive for abstractions, and in which quantum physics will not appear "strange." Later, some of them can be advised to study in addition physical chemistry, metallurgy, even physiology, especially of the nervous system. It is not a great exaggeration to say that almost any bit of odd information is more likely to inspire an original invention than knowledge which the inventor shares with all his professional colleagues.

We may be agreed that this country needs inventors to hold our own in the international race, but this does not necessarily mean that we approve of the race itself, any more than we approve of the armaments race. I want, therefore, to pose in all seriousness the question: *"Do we need more inventions?"*

There is, of course, an easy answer to this. Almost every important invention unbalances the front of progress, and a new invention is needed to redress the balance. Disinfectants and chemotherapy have strongly reduced child mortality in the East, the population is growing out of control, and we need "the Pill" to keep it in bounds. The steam engine, the internal combustion engine, etc., are threatening our stock of fossil fuel with exhaustion; we must have nuclear power, and after that thermonuclear power. This is a compelling practical argument, but a very unsatisfactory one. It means simply that we cannot stop inventing, because we are riding a tiger!

Let us therefore hear what our best contemporaries have to say on this question: our writers and thinkers. But I am afraid it is not much use going to them for encouragement. To-day a scientist or inventor must be very illiterate indeed if he is to retain a little of the happy, confident spirit of Samuel Smiles or of the Prince Consort a hundred years ago. It may be better for his peace of mind if outside working hours he is interested only in music, or if he reads nothing but detective novels. He may even read good literature, but, as I think most scientists do, he must not take it seriously. If he takes seriously what our best contemporary thinkers and men of letters have to say on the subject of industrial civilisation, it will make him at best very unhappy. At the worst it will give him a strong desire to give up his futile and dangerous work, and to retire into a monastery.

I believe that it is a very significant fact that no optimistic Utopia has been written for the last thirty years. Utopian literature did not die, as one might think, in 1914; it survived the first World War by about a decade. Some of H. G. Wells' best utopian works date from this time, and I recall with particular pleasure the *Daedalus* of the young J. B. S. Haldane, sparkling with optimism, and belief in salvation by science. But after Aldous Huxley's incomparably

[11] I am aware that such a course might not be suitable for a new Thomas Alva Edison, but it is always difficult to cater for the exceptional genius. Edison could absorb whole libraries full of odd facts with his enormous eidetic memory, but he was unable to learn mathematics and quantitative physics. It is quite possible that he would have failed all examinations in mathematics.

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brilliant anti-utopia *Brave New World* (1931), no more utopias were written, only dreary science fiction and George Orwell's horrible nightmare *1984*.

Working against Leisure

If we cannot get encouragement from the men of letters, can we perhaps get it from our fellow-scientists? No more utopias were written for the last generation, but we have now scientific forecasts from two distinguished physicists, *The Foreseeable Future* by Sir George Thomson (1958), and *The Next Million Years*, from Sir Charles Darwin (1952). Thomson's is a cautious application of the scientific method, neither very encouraging, nor disturbing, but Darwin's is a profoundly depressing book. His thesis, is, briefly, that we are not moving towards a Golden Age, because the present is a Golden Age, and the next million years will see a sort of statistical fluctuation around a level rather lower than the present. I have no wish to give a rival forecast of the next million years, but I want to give my view, for what it is worth, of the near future. My thesis is, briefly, that from a purely material point of view a "Golden Age" is at hand—but that there are immensely strong forces at work to prevent us entering it for the next few generations—and that there is nobody to show us the way to it.

The plain fact is that science and technology have immensely enlarged the set of "possible worlds." Until quite recently, the majority of people had to work hard to keep a leisured minority. We are now for the first time in history faced with the possibility of a world in which only a minority need work, to keep the great majority in idle luxury. Soon the minority which has to work for the rest may be so small that it could be entirely recruited from volunteers, who prefer the joys of a useful and even of a dedicated life to idleness.

Men have always envied the leisured classes, but it now appears that the dream of leisure for all is turning into a nightmare. Indeed, to think of the privileged classes of the past is enough to make one doubtful. The aristocracies of the past had two great psychological satisfactions which would be denied to a leisured majority: they could command human service, and they believed themselves to be *élites*. Yet for the averagely gifted members of the privileged classes life became bearable only by hard drinking!

The leisured society of the future is still mostly below the horizon, but it seems to me that our contemporary world has already developed several very strong defence mechanisms to prevent it from becoming a reality.

The first defence mechanism is Parkinson's Law: "Work automatically expands so as to fill the available time." Though this great law was first formulated in this country, if we want to see it in action we must look to the United States, the most advanced and richest industrial country, where "to-morrow is already here." In the United States in 1957, for the first time in history, the "white-collar workers" have outnumbered the "blue-collar workers"; there are now more paper-pushers than tool-pushers. It is only surprising why they do not outnumber them 3:1 or 4:1. Not very long ago the great majority of mankind had to work in agriculture; even in the U.S. in 1900 the proportion was 31 per cent. To-day less than 12 per cent are sufficient to produce so much food that a great fraction of it goes daily down the drains, that millions are on a slimming diet, and producers of canned foods advertise that their food has *less* calories per weight than that of their competitors. Or look at the car industry, where less than a million workers produce so many cars that they can be sold fast enough only by employing all the means of high-pressure salesmanship to make customers change them long before the car starts showing signs of wear. These are very clear manifestations of Parkinson's Law. But looking at it this way, the growth of paper-pushers is not a tumour; it is the healthy reaction of a society in which people have been brought up to work, not only for earning money, but also because they want to feel useful, and want to keep their self-respect.

A second, perhaps even more important defence mechanism is the recent strong increase of the birth rate, particularly noticeable in the United States, but also in Britain and in France. This is quite a different phenomenon from the overpopulation of poor and ignorant countries. It is again an expression of our healthy and virtuous civilisation; people have more babies not because they cannot help it, but because they love having children. Nevertheless, apart from the very different motivation, it looks dangerously like Malthus' Law, on which Darwin based his pessimistic outlook; the law that a population tends to increase up to the starvation limit. I am inclined to take a less serious view of this, as may be seen from my putting Malthus' Law

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on the same level as Parkinson's Law. I do not believe that in highly civilised countries the population need grow up to the starvation level, but it looks to me as if it had a tendency to grow up to a level sufficient to ban the nightmare of leisure for everybody.

A third defence mechanism, and a very strong one, is, of course—Defence. All I need say about it is that much of the effort in all industrial countries goes into making the most devilishly ingenious products of the human mind, which at best will never be used, at worst might destroy all of us.

Our contemporary world has a fourth defence mechanism ready against a too easy life, and I am glad to say that at least this one is wholly laudable. It is aid to the under-developed countries of the East. It is not on a large scale, and it will not last long, as these countries are already making very determined efforts to raise themselves to a higher technological level; but while it lasts it will be good for them, and good for us.

THESE four, as I see it, are the chief defence mechanisms of our society against the nightmare of a leisured world, for which we are socially and psychologically unprepared. I do not feel competent to give an opinion on the question whether mankind can or cannot be conditioned to bear leisure without boredom, and without losing that magnificent spirit by which a poor animal, almost toothless and clawless, has raised itself gradually to the status of modern man. For my part, I should be satisfied with a compromise, because man in the past has shown rather too much fighting spirit. But I can see little sign of any preparations to meet this problem in our Western civilisation, and none at all in the Soviet Union where the official creed is, of course, to deny the existence of the problem altogether.[12] This may well be a great danger, because they are making such great strides in their industrial development that they may well take the step from poverty to plenty in one generation, instead of the two or three of the Western countries, psychologically completely unprepared and with all their dynamism still in their blood.

It is a sad thought indeed that our civilisation has not produced a *new vision*, which could guide us on into the new "Golden Age" which has now become physically possible, but only physically. All we have is the pedestrian dream of the trade unions of the 35-hour week, the 24-hour week, and so on. But even this is not certain, because work which is not necessary to sustain life may have to come back as *occupational therapy*. This reminds me of the pathetic picture of the dog in the old physiological laboratories, climbing endlessly up a moving ramp. The dog will never get anywhere, but at least it will keep in fine fettle.

The Lost Vision

WHO is responsible for this tragi-comedy of Man frustrated by success? If the intellectuals at the other side of the fence say that the fault is ours, of the scientists and inventors, we are not in a position to deny it. But instead of bowing our heads in shame, I think we ought to return the accusation, and ask: "Who has left Mankind without a Vision?" The predictable part of the future may be a job for electronic predictors, but that part of it which is not predictable, which is largely a matter of free human choice, is not the business of machines, nor of scientists, not even of psychologists, but it ought to be, as it was in the great epochs of the past, the prerogative of the inspired humanists, of the poets and writers. And for more than a generation we receive from these quarters little else but more or less polished expressions of despair and disgust.

Some thirty years ago the French critic Julien Benda wrote a famous book, *La Trahison des Clercs*, in which he accused the *"clercs,"* the writers and thinkers (who by their vocation had the duty to uphold the ideals of freedom, justice, and the dignity of the individual) of "treason" by embracing dogma of one sort or another, or

[12] The official attitude of Marxists is, I believe, well illustrated by the following quotation from the late Frédéric Joliot: "There are those who object to the view of progress which depends upon shorter working hours on the grounds that then people will not know what to do with their leisure, and will let themselves lapse into idleness and immorality. Such fears are groundless, because the time saved on working hours will open up to the individual a culture rich enough to induce him to work spontaneously during his leisure at the things he enjoys, and even attain the supreme joy of creative achievement in the realm of art and of science." (*Quelques réflexions sur l'énergie, Physique et Chimie*, Paris, 1958.)

To believe this one would have to believe first either that in future *everybody* will be exceptionally gifted, or that the less gifted members of the old leisured classes were driven to drink by a bad conscience.

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the creed of extreme nationalism. To-day we are faced with a new treason of the *clercs*—oh, nothing as crude and criminal as the treason of the French intellectuals Barrès and Maurras—no treason by commission, but only by omission: by not giving us a vision for which to live.

Until such time when our *clercs* change their mind, and come up from their depths of comfortable and complacent despair, we shall have to muddle through, from invention to invention. And if we want a measure of hope, we must not turn to the intellectuals; we must look at the present and into the past.

In the present we can see more simple happiness of the Common Man than has ever existed in the world. Even uniformity can have its delights. Some years ago I saw in the *New Yorker* the following cartoon: a suburban row of houses, as far as the eye can see, and through every gate steps a young man, who has just arrived with the commuter's train. A little dog with wagging tail runs out to greet every young man, behind every dog runs a little toddler, and behind every little toddler, on the doorstep, stands a smiling young wife. This is stereotyped happiness, but unique and wonderful for those who live it. Worse things can happen to humanity than this scene repeating itself through a hundred generations!

This is what we can see in the present. Looking into the past, we can see our ancestors, men with much the same capabilities as ours, miserably sheltering under dripping trees from the cold pelting rain. The journey which led from these poor savages to the distinguished audience following my remarks seems to me worth while. It will be for another in another historic epoch before another audience, to draw the balance of splendours and miseries and to decide whether the rest of the journey was necessary.

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W. H. Auden

Dame Kind

Steatopygous, sow-dugged
and owl-headed,
To Whom the first innocent blood
was formally shed
By a chinned mammal that hard times
had turned carnivore,
From Whom his first promiscuous orgy
begged a downpour
To speed the body-building cereals
of a warmer age:
Now who put *us*, we should like to know,
in *Her* manage?

Strait-laced She never was
and has not grown more so
Since the sceptical academies got wind
of the Chi-Ro;
St Cuckoo's wooden church for Her
where on Green Sundays
Bald hermits celebrate a wordless
cult in Her praise:
So pocket your fifty sonnets, bud;
tell Her a myth
Of unpunishable gods and all the girls
they interfered with.

Haven't we spotted Her Picked Winners
whom She cossets, ramparts
And does the handsome by? Didn't the darlings
have cold hearts?
. . . ONE BOMB WOULD BE ENOUGH . . . Now look
who's thinking gruesome!
Brother, you're worse than a lonesome Peeper
or a He-Virgin
Who nightly abhors the Primal Scene
in medical Latin:
She mayn't be all She might be but
She *is* our Mum.

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You can't tell us your hypochondriac
blue-stocking from Provence
Who makes the clockwork arcadies go round
is worth twopence;
You won't find a steady in *that* museum
unless you prefer
Tea with a shapeless angel to bedtime
with a lovely monster:
Before you catch it for your mim look
and gnostic chirrup,
Ask the Kind Lady that fitted you out
to fix you up.

Supposing, even (through misdirections
of your own mischief)
You do land in that anomalous duchy,
Her remotest fief,
Where four eyes encounter in two
one mirror perilous
As the clear rock-basin that stultified
frigid Narcissus,
Where tongues stammer on a First Name,
bereft of guile,
And common snub-nosed creatures are abashed
at a face in profile,

Even there, as your blushes invoke its guardian
(whose true invokable
Name is singular for each true heart
and false to tell)
To sacre your courtship ritual so
it deserve a music
More solemn than the he-hawing
of a salesman's limerick,
Do a bow to the Coarse Old Party that wrought you
an alderliefest
Of the same verbose and sentient kidney,
grateful not least

For all the dirty work She did.
How many hundreds
Of lawful, unlawful, both equally
loveless beds,
Of false endearments, crooked questions,
crookeder answers,
Of bawling matches, sarcastic silences,
megrims, tears,
How much half-witted horse-play and sheer
bloody misrule,
It took to bring you two together
both on schedule?

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Murray Sayle

As Far As You Can Go

Confessions of an Australian Alien

AUSTRALIANS themselves, unprompted, feel that they belong to an absurd nationality, and take an upside-down pride in it. A book called *They're a Weird Mob*, by an Australian, has just broken all Australian publishing records (it was, ostensibly, by an Italian migrant, but no genuine Italian or migrant would hit on such an artfully flattering title), and it sounds the note of affectionate denigration which Australians love to hear—except, of course, from Englishmen, from whom we demand the unqualified approval which we never get. And so the basis of our mutual love-hate is firmly laid.

The Australian's feeling that he is absurd is linked with the similar self-awareness of the Irish, who have given us close on a third of our people. But we have none of the Irishman's explanatory suffering for great causes, nor, indeed, anything much of anything to point to by way of explaining the insistent and unmistakable personality we seem to have developed in complete isolation from the rest of the human race.

At least, so it must seem to an Englishman, and seeing oneself through English eyes is a trick an Australian learns slowly and painfully, although learn it we must before we begin to forgive what we take for English ignorance about us, arrogance and patronising towards us.

Now, Australia, you may think. Where is it? A long way away, and you picture to yourself the wet bulge of the world's belly in between. Founded as a penal colony, the commonwealth of thieves, and you may smile at a very old joke, the only laugh in the long story of Empire-building. Inhabited by British people, set in British ways: cricket, football, C. of E. and what's for tea, Mum? The people speak a very English variant of English, a sort of lock-jawed Cockney, and display certain English attitudes, North-Country mateyness or shop-steward surliness, alternating in unpredictable ways. But, basically, British, and why shouldn't they be? After all, they come from a place where, apart from the convicts and the bodyline controversy of 1933, *nothing has ever happened*. No civil wars, no French, no Red Indians, no slavery, no dates to learn, no Wolfes, Clives, Washingtons, nothing.

But Australians still seem to be awkward people. Most of my English friends put it down to the upside-down theory. Standing on their heads, in a lunar landscape hopping with improbable animals, Australians have inverted the British society they have inherited. Politeness has become bluntness, even boorishness, gentle birth is a social encumbrance, Jack is better than his master, and the voice of the worker is heard, deafeningly, in the land.

Now, the aggravating thing about this picture of us is that, although it explains nothing, it is true as far as it goes. There is something absurd about us, or, to be kinder, there are contradictions in our society and our personality which we have not been able to resolve, and most of them stem from our British heritage and the way in which we have adapted it—indeed, from where else could it have come, except from the kangaroos?

We seem to the English to have no history just because all our history, effectively, has been Britain: old slights, old grudges which we all hold, unacknowledged perhaps, against our

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parents, which no parent ever guesses, and underneath the reproaching and undeniable fact of blood relationship.

I SAILED from Sydney, my birthplace, aboard the old *R.M.S. Otranto* on August 8th, 1952. I left a good job which, alarmingly, looked like getting better: I felt the Australian emptiness closing in on me and I had to get out. There was a business about a girl to trigger me, but I had planned to come to London for years, and anyway she'd gone there, too.

Besides, it's easy to join a mass movement. We had aboard a couple of young architects headed for the L.C.C., two or three dentists who'd heard about the National Health bonanza, a gaggle of typists looking for Rex Harrison-type English husbands, academics, advertising men, school-teachers, nurses, pianists, poets, painters—a section of the young artistic and professional group making the customary pilgrimage to London, and every ship from Australia brings another. Like all migrants, we were looking for something we couldn't find at home, and we weren't coming back without it. The remoteness of Australia builds up in us a great curiosity about the rest of the world, about, for reasons which will become plain, Britain in particular. All the ships, or nearly all, go to London from Australia, and there is a legend that Australians easily find jobs in Britain, easily get to meet the people they're interested in, and can fall no harder than on the pillow of the Welfare State. By and large, the legend is true.

Of course, many go back after a year or so, disappointed. A mass movement inevitably includes the hero-worshippers, the hangers-on, and the people you went to school with, who clerk away drearily in some City office or Government department, shiver in bed-sits in Earl's Court ("Kangaroo Valley") with a penny in the gas, and gather for underground evenings of abusing the English and grizzling about the weather. They go back to assure the people in Sydney that there's no place like home, and they're right—there isn't.

It must not be thought that Australians come to Britain as explorers. I had never heard of a football pool or a holiday camp, but I had the bright, clear, utterly lop-sided colonial's image of Britain, reinforced by my father's memories as a soldier on leave in London during the first World War: the cosy military solidarity of the Old Firm, greatcoats dusted with snow, gaslight on fog, the sing-songs round the piano in mirrored pubs in Victoria, *Roses are Shining in Picardy* and *It's the Wrong Way to Tickle Mary*. And, of course, the bonds of the gas, the wire, the guns, and the memorials, indelibly connected for Australians with Britain.

But, apart from my father's stories, I had my own fund of information, dating from childhood: a working knowledge of the geography of London from playing Monopoly, a blurred picture of British society derived from *The Gem* and *The Magnet* and A. A. Milne—a world of nannies and guardsmen, copses and dells, schoolboys in striped caps who had *paters* and said *Eoooow!*

This bore absolutely no relation to my own childhood whatever, but existed, a separate, parallel world, alongside my own. I have since discovered that almost all of the people of Britain have these two childhoods, their own and the one in books, but this I had no way of knowing, and anyway mine had half the world between them.

As well as with information, real or illusory, I came with a whole set of Australian attitudes to Britain which I hardly knew existed: which are, really, attitudes to life itself. I don't mean to present myself as particularly representative: we have inadequates, fools, saints, boors, and the rest of the human spectrum among us, just as any other nationality has, and who these days doesn't know of the dangers of national categorisation? But a man meeting a stranger, or a new country, is most like his national stereotype, and we are probably more uniform than most people anyway, so some general account of our outlook is useful. More than most people's, it has been conditioned by our history, and to this we must turn.

Empire Builders

YOU understand why Australia was selected for British colonisation in 1788 when you know where it is—as far from Britain as you can get.

The conditions cannot recur on this earth, but suppose Britain had got to the moon first, as Cook did to Australia: in its day, as outlandish a voyage. What an opportunity to solve local difficulties!

A very large rocket could be built on Clapham Common. Into it, wearing light chains (no cruelty, just the minimum needed for restraint) we might load Mr. Frank Cousins, the inmates of Wormwood Scrubs, the patrons of the *Partisan*, Mr. Sean Lemass' Cabinet, the

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General Council of the T.U.C., the editorial staff of *Newsletter*, and the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament. Bertrand Russell could go as Chaplain and George Dawson as Treasurer. The colonists might be equipped with cricket bats and copies of the Book of Common Prayer, lest they sink into barbarism, and a small Union Jack to run up in case they struck it rich in oil, uranium, or anything useful.

A minor member of the Royal Family might come along to the launching, with a few words about New Elizabethans and the spirit of adventure, and Whoosh!—that's the last we need worry our heads about *them*.

Adjusted to time and technology, our hypothetical expedition catches the off-handed improvisation, the one-eyed, remote-control logicality of the foundation of Australia, and our passenger-list reproduces the bizarre mixture of brains and villainy, crime and high principle represented by the first Australians. This is a minor, forgotten incident in Britain's history, but naturally it fascinates us Australians, like a child's interest in what Mummy was wearing when she caught Daddy's eye. Did no one think, we wonder, that the remoteness of the place put it in the hostile side of the world, far from Europe, where one day waves of anti-European nationalism would beat dangerously on our shores? Did they think that British sea-power, which made this luxury solution of the social problem possible, would last forever? But this is absurd. Empires are built in this desperate, bright-idea way, and time, for all of us, has put Mummy's intentions beyond our reproach.

It's not altogether a one-way business: children influence parents, too, even if only in a negative way. No Lenin came swimming home from Britain's Siberia, which is one reason why Britain has a working class which has voted fairly consistently for the boss as long as it has been privileged to do so. In its primary function, Australia worked.

It is not known who first thought of Australia as a penal colony, and I don't suppose his statue would be put up in Sydney if scholarship did winkle him out. Whoever he was, prison commissioner or do-gooding amateur geographer, his idea came in the nick of time. The oncoming industrial revolution was bulging the gaols. The American colonies, which had been taking a thousand British convicts a year, had revolted: Canada was touch-and-go and it was important (as it still is) not to antagonise the last bridgehead in the New World: the easy-going Spanish colonies in South America had been helping the old country over a trying period by taking a yearly shipment of a few hundred, but relations with Spain were deteriorating, and the authorities in London were uneasy about handing members of the C. of E., even criminals, over to Catholicism: for the moment, the Empire was effectively down to India and a few odd islands.

India was out. The market for pick-and-shovel labourers was already overcrowded, the sight of members of the ruling race in chains might have given the Indians all sorts of ideas, and the convicts themselves might have easily gone native and let the side down.

Instead, with the world spread out before her like a smörgåsbord, Britain was able, off-handedly, to appropriate the last large, empty piece of the world's surface—what a chance it might have been for trying one of those 19th-century socialist utopias!—as a squalid penal colony, behind the world's back. This is the right to use and abuse, the ultimate luxury of sea-power.

One wonders what might have happened if the discontents of the Industrial Revolution had been shipped to India, instead. But it is one of the curiosities of the greatest of the sea-empires that the daughter communities, unlike a human family, have never met, never influenced one another.

Thus, although Britain is the head of a polyglot multi-coloured imperial family, from the viewpoint of the offspring—we in Australia, for instance—we are each an only child, with the close, steamy, and neurosis-breeding emotional entanglement of an only daughter and her widowed mother.

Thus, Britain-and-India is a mystery, and a repulsive one at that, to us who have been brought up in the climate of Britain-and-Australia. We have never resisted British muskets and red jackets, we have never kissed a British foot, we have never seen a flock of returning Sahibs attempt to impose, as they have on the Irish and English lower orders, the prostrations and untouchabilities they learnt Out East. When we think of Britain in a personal way, we think of the hovels and the factories of the industrial towns from which we came, something the Indians were not supposed to know about. The British military caste, with its scarlet trousers, feathers, jewelled Orders, and the rest of the imperial haberdashery we have always thought of as a baffling joke, something

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hard to connect with the chums from the slums, the British we know at first-hand.

Thus I, as a child, thought the British were in India to do honest business, as they did with us. I thought, God help me, that the whole thing rested on consent. This is the consequence of a political system carried by ships which pass at sea, but never meet.

Digging up Leg Irons

ALTOGETHER, one hundred and sixty thousand men, women, and children were shipped from Britain as convicts to Botany Bay or less attractive places on the Australian coast. This is a lot of people, three or four times as numerous as the mould-making Puritans who went to America. Arriving to enact their section of the extraordinary population explosion of English-speaking people in the 19th century, they provided the solid basis of our ancestry, and, moreover, of all our attitudes.

The convict fathers are, for us, a subject charged with emotion. In my grandparents' time, people who admitted to convict blood were as rare as Nazis in Germany in 1945, although few families of substantial residence in the country can be without it. In the last century, Australian politicians, adopting without question the moralistic attitudes of the society which had sent their fathers there, used to go on and on about "effacing the convict birth-stains"—this was to be done by getting rich and making Britain richer. Now, some sort of apologetic pride in our ancestors' hardiness, if nothing else, begins to develop.

It would be easy, and natural enough, simply to hate a community which valued a loaf of bread or a forged pound-note above a man's life, and to hate those who have inherited the power to enforce the same valuation on brown and black men in our own time. But is this not unreasonable? The emotional parents of the industrial revolution, the most important event of these thousand years, were greed and brutality, sanctified by Protestanism and the economic doctrines descended from it. The industrial system makes more human life possible, and so on balance is a good: it happened to be the English worker's blood which brought it into being, and this has been a dearly-bought privilege. Those who obstructed it, who wouldn't fit in, had to be liquidated. Transportation was a convenient half-way house between hanging the lot ("it's the only language they understand") and a more humane view of their crimes, which perhaps might have made the construction of the first industrialism impossible. It was, we may think, too important an operation to take risks with.

Having acknowledged that the principle of giving these people a second chance of life might, somewhere, have had the germ of humaneness in it, let us turn to the reality, which every Australian school-child knows by heart. The Assizes, anything up to ten years in the hulks of the Thames or the Mersey, the voyage of six months out from England, chained, battened below decks in the hold of a worm-eaten ship (the *Queen Elizabeths* of the day were on the American run, of course), then the barracks at Botany Bay, the harsh, killing country, the chain-gang, the triangle, the lash, perhaps the gallows at the end of it all. The terrifying (at least, it terrifies *me*) Liverpool convict song, *Van Diemen's Land*, nicely condenses our folk memories:

The minute that they landed us, upon that dreadful shore,
The planters they inspected us, full forty-score or more.
They led us out like horses, and sold us out of hand,
And yoked us to the plough, me boys, to plough Van Diemen's Land.

Living in Sydney, you have memories of the convict system all around you. Every now and then a farmer, ploughing his fields near the city limits, turns up rusty leg-irons, and the newspapers duly report it, like a find of Saxon coins in Britain. Our beautiful harbour is dominated by Pinchgut, reputed fortress prison for recalcitrant convicts; where Saint Paul's is in London, on a choice hilltop site overlooking the commercial district, we have Darlinghurst Gaol, built by our optimistic pioneer administrators with walls fourteen feet thick to last for ever. I remember, as a boy, watching the warders with rifles on their shoulders patrolling the catwalks, and tracing the broad arrow and initials of, for all I know, some ancestor on the huge blocks of stone, and feeling, through this reality, my connection with the English kings and queens I was learning at school.

The circumstances of a community's foundation are stamped on it, indelibly, to the end. Each newcomer, an individual, is confronted, and moulded, by the mass already arrived in the new world before him. It is not surprising, then, that Australians are hypersensitive to anything that remotely suggests chains: I feel this in myself, and although I would not rate myself a

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particularly rebellious person, I feel a horror at the prospect of obedience, of a man obeying not because it is reasonable but because it is ordered. I suppose this has its harmful side, the necessity of convincing the dullest, or the stubbornest of us that this is the way to do it, before anything can be undertaken; it certainly has its good side, because some of us will not bow the knee even to the compulsion of impossibility, and now and then we defy that, too, and get away with it.

As well as convicts, there were gaolers, little better than the prisoners themselves and some much worse as human types. They have left their legacy, too. The governments in Sydney and Canberra are the heirs of Admiral Bligh and his soldiers, the New South Wales Corps, the real throw-outs of the British military system of the time. To this day our rulers conduct themselves half-bullyingly, half-paternistically, like an isolated garrison watching a mutinous population. They control our drinking and our sex, our reading and our writing, burning books and gaoling poets and novelists as nowhere in the Western world except Spain and Ireland. The paradox which divides the Australian ruled, to whom freedom is the breath of life, and our increasingly illiberal rulers, can have no other beginning but the guard in his scarlet coat and the convict in his chains and tatters.

We, in return, despise and mistrust our governors, compel them to a wearying pose as men of the people and deny them the gold chains and hushed respect that rulers love so well. And now you know why Mr. Menzies and his Cabinet, like most of their predecessors, love their yearly jaunt to London: an Australian politician with a taste for deference has to go abroad to be treated like a Prime Minister.

A good many of the convicts were ordinary crooks, social inadequates. One kind of Australian, "no-hopers" we call them, the nihilistic sensualists of the dog-tracks and the big bottles of plonk (you know it as Empire-type ruby, and when the pubs close at six after a hard day on the beer, it can be delicious) keep the tradition alive, and I suppose there is a proportion of it in most of us. Even so, their war-cry, *"Who says so?"* embalms a healthy attitude to authority.

But among the whores and thieves and poachers and decent village lads who had got into trouble was a glorious minority, the best human material we ever had—the British radical left of the period 1780–1840. Scottish martyrs, members of the Corresponding Societies of the French revolutionary period, English, Irish, and Welsh Chartists, Tolpuddle martyrs, Irish rebels by the thousand, co-operators, trade unionists, Paineites, Owenites, crypto-Americans; Botany Bay got them all in the end. Art was there, along with politics: ankle-to-ankle on the chain-gang with Bill Sykes were Wainewright, forger-poet, Greenaway, convict-architect, and the compositors of the London *Times*, transported in a body in 1804 for a criminal combination against the Top People.

The impact of these men is only now beginning to wane. They have won us our potent if confused, trade union system: they won, far from Peterloo, manhood suffrage, secret ballot, universal education, which we had before anyone else in the world.

They brought their dream from the old country: the New Jerusalem, where men would live as brothers and be done forever with the Old Adam of greed and envy and class-war. A century ago most Australians devoutly believed they were on their way to the City of God. A clean slate, an empty country far from Europe's built-in hatreds, a population purged by hardship and led by Britain's revolutionary *élite*: if it could have been done by simple legislation and 18th-century enlightenment then perhaps we might have passed irresistibly from the biggest open prison in the world to the first just human society. But it could not. Hard on the heels of the refuse of the industrial revolution came a flood of its product, British capital, and the dream was broken.

Underneath the spectacular Australian success, from semi-desert to gracious living in four or five generations, there is a deep consciousness of failure. It is this which gives the tinge of sadness to much of our writing, and our personality. We had a chance which will never come again for a fresh start in the closed circle of human disasters, the embittered ones say, and we threw it away for two-car garages and outdoor barbecues. Perhaps they are right.

THE practical men of late 18th-century Britain regarded the infant commonwealth of thieves much as their successors did the ground-nut scheme. Men who knew no trade but picking pockets or preaching revolution would soon starve, it was thought, and so they nearly did. Once the supply-ship from home was two years late and the convict-colonists were down to quarter-rations. But,

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hunger despite, they multiplied. Governor Bligh, not long from *H.M.S. Bounty*, conducted the first census of Sydney in 1807 and found "legitimate children 807, natural children 1,025, progeny of 395 married women and 1,035 concubines"—a clear preponderance of bastards in the first wave of white native-born Australians. Whatever their parents had done, they were free-born British subjects, and, in the view of liberally-minded people at home and in the colony, the future should hold something better than peon status for them—indeed, the general opinion was that the vast virgin lands of the new territory were their patrimony. Conferences in Sydney and London discussed the proper division of the land among them, stressing the vigilance with which the colonial régime must hold the unmapped lands in trust for generations yet unborn. I have heard well-meaning people in London construct Utopias for the Africans in the same strain.

The first Australian wool was brought to London in 1801 and found to be of excellent quality. The Napoleonic wars had cut off the wool trade with Spain; it was never to be resumed. By 1812 there was a population problem in the enclave around Sydney, and, absurdly, land-hunger. In the following year the mountain barrier was broken through; beyond lay, not China, as some of the early convicts had believed (and they died miserably, trying to escape), but the tideless sea of grass stretching a thousand miles into the interior, flat, ownerless, empty.

The first convicts doing seven- and fourteen-year stretches were by this time ticket-of-leave men, free to go where they liked in Australia, with a new gang of convicts assigned to them for the cost of their food. The desire to get rich had brought many of them, indirectly, to Australia in the first place. They had nothing to lose except their lives, and as the recaptured convict bushranger Martin Cash said at his trial, "I beg your Honour's pardon, but I do not beg for my life, as I do not value it a straw."

While a just division of empty Australia was being debated, time-expired old lags, pressing through the mountain passes and fanning out into the ungoverned no-man's-land beyond, took it for themselves—and unknowingly led the last great expansion of European civilisation into the wilderness.

So it comes about that the names of many of the great Australian land-owning families can be found in the Newgate Calendar. These pioneers of ours established the hard, brutal style which continues to this day under the surface of Australian life. They were not farmers, not as a European thinks of a farmer with his sacramental love of his land. There is more desert in Australia now than there was when the British came. The pioneers had been cut off from the land of Britain by the filter of the industrial system, from whose factories and slums they came. They had no tradition of any kind, no past they wanted to remember. They knew nothing except that land makes you rich, land makes you free, and they hardly know any more to this day.

Unlike the matronly downs of England, the Australian country took unkindly to being raped. It struck back, and still strikes back, with flood, fire, drought. The aboriginal population, gentle and unwarlike, didn't count, they were exterminated, brushed aside, and hardly anything survives of them in the settled parts of the country except our odd place-names and here and there a pioneer's grave, *"Speared by black or blacks unknown."* The blacks, shot, starved, poisoned, have no graves.

The country itself was a tougher opponent, and the settlers with modest ideas were soon wiped out. The ones who survived were those with the nerve to appropriate a holding the size of an English county, and the energy to sink bores for water and fence the land in huge slabs to rest it periodically from the destructive sheep.

All this took capital, which soon began flooding in from Britain as Australian wool became the principal raw material of an important British industry. Pastoral companies were formed in London and Edinburgh to exploit the new proposition: they were assigned as much land as they asked for, and in turn financed likely colonials who knew the ropes to dummy for them on the leases.

While a succession of old-womanish Governors, bewildered by the speed of the receding frontier, dithered in Sydney, Australia was being carved up on a giant scale. In the beginning, the land-takers had no legal rights: they squatted, and so we call a great landowner a squatter. But in 1855 the squatters themselves became the government, when the disposition of Crown land was handed over to the colonial legislatures, elected on a strict propertied franchise, and they promptly confirmed themselves forever in the ownership of the land they had so recently taken without a by-your-leave.

To their shame, men who had been trans-

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ported for Chartist activities were among those who voted themselves whole counties and duchies of land, and did their best to confine the vote to "those who had a stake in the colony" —themselves.

The demand for labour by a pastoral industry devoted to getting rich quick and moving on when the land turns to desert is small, but there was more to be done than the thieves, Irish rebels, and poachers of the convict community were disposed to do. Besides, a more disciplined type of worker than the time-served old lag was wanted, and free assisted immigration began. British workhouses were cleared of the able-bodied poor, prostitutes were rounded up from the streets of London and Liverpool and shipped out as wives for the predominantly male community, and out of these materials, stirred into the convict base, the Australian proletariat was born.

We had an Irish lass on board, Mary Johnson was her name,
And she was shipped from Liverpool for a-playing of the game.
She took the Captain's fancy, and he married her off-hand,
And she gave us all good usage, going to Van Diemen's Land.

Australia Infelix

THE pattern of our community was established by about 1850, when for practical purposes the whole country had been alienated and the frontier existed no more. The rest followed in inevitable sequence. The wool industry grew rapidly to its full size: there were a hundred million sheep before the end of the last century, and a hundred and fifty million now, bringing in somewhere about £250 million a year in foreign exchange (but Korean wars can push this up to £450 million, and droughts at home or depression abroad can cut it close to zero), and a good slice of this goes to service our by now enormous debt to Britain.

For British capital, doing well in wool, was readily available for almost anything that looked like showing a profit. Roads, railways, ports, power supplies were built with the proceeds of bonds floated on the London market. Then the British manufacturer began directly interesting himself in Australia, and few really big British concerns have not got an Australian subsidiary: mining and steel, chemicals, heavy industries of all sorts are dominated by a few great Anglo-Australian companies.

The goldrushes, beginning in 1851, gave us a great increase in population, and the towering figure of our folk-hero, Ned Kelly, who robbed the gold convoys on their way from the Ballarat diggings to Melbourne and died defiantly on the gallows. But they hardly changed the structure of our community at all. A few, a very few of the diggers, struck it rich enough to buy land and become squatters themselves, but the great majority had nothing but their labour to sell when the surface gold gave out and the big Anglo-Australian mining companies took over.

Some of the miners went to swell the growing proletariat of Sydney and Melbourne; others went "on the track," looking for work on the land. Either way, they soon absorbed the potent radical tradition of the landless Australians, and before long the big capital of the countryside, the huge pastoral runs, the banks and the investment companies were challenged by big organised labour.

The sheep-shearers, for instance, and the boundary riders have had powerful unions for a century or more. The Australian agricultural worker has never, even remotely, resembled the dim-witted European peasant: he is a tough, politically-aware proletarian who has absorbed British working-class radicalism from the very founders of it. The Australian equivalents of Billy the Kid and Jesse James were union organisers who raised the cries of *"scab!"* and *"blackleg!"* around the camp-fire, words which would have made the American bad-men, with their bourgeois morality, blush.

When industry followed wool, the unions grew as quickly, and our all-embracing trade unionism has won for the Australian worker pay and conditions which can only be matched in the United States. The price has been a virulent class-war and something near the world record for strikes and lock-outs (I am not condemning them, of course, merely pointing to this symptom of division in the community), all the stranger to an outsider because the contending "classes," if they can be called that, are nearly enough identical in outlook, speech, and customs.

British investment spared us the dictatorships and misery of primary capital accumulation, sweating the first few machines out of aching backs and empty bellies as the Chinese now have to do, and we began with a country by nature far harder than China.

It is probably true that the Victorian class-struggle, imported along with British capital,

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put paid to the old dream of *Australia Felix*, where men were to grow to their full stature in a Chartist-Socialist Utopia. But it could not have been otherwise. The country was too hard for Utopia-builders. Australian agriculture, and industry following it, is a chancy, big-capital proposition, and only Britain had the capital to spare.

However, this is not intended as a treatise of economic history, and I have sketched our past in order to introduce a gallery of Australian types, or rather stereotypes, by way of describing the community which I left seven years ago for Britain. It is a short list. There is a peculiar thinness and uniformity about our society, as if it had been stripped of everything but the bare economic processes and their human participants. We have none of the multiplex social hierarchies of Europe, nor the clash between antiquated classes and changing economic realities. Unless you approach Australians as individuals, you have to categorise them in terms of their jobs, and as all but a tiny handful are wage-workers and their families you still have no very useful compartments. Indeed, met in a bar, I don't suppose anyone but an Australian could tell them apart.

THE squatter, the great land-owner, has been our most important style-setter. In a predominantly agricultural community, he is the natural leader, the nearest we have had to an aristocrat. But there is nothing of the leisured man of property about him. As often as not, he is the mere local satrap for one of the big Anglo-Australian stock and station companies. Caught between the harsh and unpredictable country and the impersonal, distantly-owned banks, he is perpetually at the mercy of droughts and floods on the one hand, the ups-and-downs of the world commodity market on the other, both as unaccountable as God. Because he needs the Government's railways to move his sheep from the recurring droughts, the Government's credit and its scientific marketing services, he is active in politics, but his programme is the same as the old-fashioned British Low Tory's—keep your hand on your wallet.

The westering American wagon-train carried, besides ploughs and axes, at least a smattering of that old-time religion and some charming eccentrics like the Mormons; the Teutonic Knights brought Prussia their own brand of Christianity, and a military code, for what that is worth; our pioneers had deserts in their heads and so, by and large, have their heirs. You would have to look to Ghenghis Khan's captains to get a similar mentality among landed men. This is not to say they are not tough, independently-minded people, superbly competent at racking three-piece suits for the world out of their dry pastures. But, considering the great fortunes which have been taken out of the Australian land, they have put almost nothing that is not immediately functional back.

Our country towns are mere railheads, full of warm-hearted people but dull and dreary beyond description, without libraries, bookshops, or, commonly, even meeting-halls, mere thirsty roots of the economic tree whose leaves and flowers are not in Australia at all, but in Britain. The zenith of Australian landed wealth is to own a string of race-horses.

But, on the strength of a few grand pianos and collected works of Bulwer-Lytton seen going up-country on bullock-drays in the old days, the squatter thinks of himself as a cultivated fellow, an oasis of culture insulated from the brawling, loutish yawp of the big cities. So we have revealing incidents, much enjoyed by us urban Australians, like this well-documented vignette in Sydney's biggest gramophone-record store:

Countryman (*identified by his wide hat and elastic-sided boots*): You handle the classics?
Assistant: Yes, we do.
Countryman: Righto, I'll take them.
Assistant: All of them?
Countryman: Yair, I'll have the lot. Don't mind if it costs me a few quid.

Assistant goes out to the store and comes back with armload after armload of unselling and unsaleable recordings of obscure symphonies, building up a quarter-ton or so of records on the counter.

Countryman: That the lot? That's the classics?
Assistant: That's all we have.
Countryman: Send them up to my place, and (*turning briskly to go*) if any more of this stuff comes out, let me know, will you?

The smaller brothers of the sheep-man, the wheat-cocky and cow-cocky, have absorbed his style.

So has the Australian business executive. Our first businessmen were wool brokers, closely followed by wheat and shipping, and then by the representatives of British manufacturers, and finally by a handful of home-grown industrialists. They are not very imaginative men,

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outside the narrow field of their businesses: many of them regret that they have to find their labour-force among Australians who are just as tough-minded as themselves, and they sigh for the mythical old days when British migrants could be shipped out, finger to forelock, and a good many years' obedience could be expected before they became Australianised and the unions got them.

The pinnacle of their social ambitions is the members' bar at Randwick or Flemington racecourses and a "lovely home" by the harbour in Sydney or (just to be perverse) away from the port area in Melbourne. This goes with the top job, and the only obstacle is the other people who have got the same idea. So the Australian business world is a pitiless middle-class jungle, war without quarter between automatons who have achieved formidable efficiency by suppressing everything else which makes a man interesting. The Australian business community, too, has produced a mean kind of nationalism, based on ignorance (few of them have been outside Australia), in which national virtues are equated with a vulgar display of consumer goods and the coloured-toilet-paper type of genteel "gracious living" which is becoming general in the Western world wherever business is doing well, but which, like most imports to Australia, flourishes mightily because it has no natural enemies.

People of this sort are busy commercialising and debasing the native Australian tradition of solidarity in adversity ("stick by your mates"), using radio and TV stars and sporting heroes as front men for their businesses and thus deflecting the inborn Australian suspicion of businessmen by interposing phoney public personalities created by the rapidly growing public relations industry.

POLITICALLY, the Australian businessman has enjoyed a businessman's government for the past ten years. Our politics follow Britain's with remarkable precision. We had pussy-footed Conservative rule in the 'thirties, then a Labour landslide and important reforms in the direction of central control over the economy, then the triumph of a re-built and renamed conservatism which in Australia can hardly describe itself as such (what, in a new and booming country with hardly any past, is there to conserve?), and so calls itself the Liberal Party, although it is, by Australian standards illiberal in its general tendency. This has been suffered to rule for so long because the same sort of disaster which has overtaken the British Labour Party has split and decimated its Australian counterpart, with special local causes which has made the collapse of the A.L.P. even more complete, but still part of the general eclipse of the Left throughout the Western world.

The businessman's wife, embattled in a house-proud but servantless suburbia, seldom gets her nose away from the domestic grindstone. When she does it is to absorb a pre-digested spurious "culture," dispensed by women's magazines and mostly consisting of European art-fashions of thirty or forty years ago.

The Australian worker is a more interesting type, and the rural and urban varieties have diverged very little and can be considered together. He is the "typical" Australian, and when the British, or others, think of Australians, it is the worker they have in mind. These days he works in a factory, for the most part (a minority of Australians have anything to do with the land, and that is run like a big business, anyway), but his traditions come from the convict and the failed gold-miner who went "on the track." This means that, unlike his American counterpart, he is very keenly aware that other people own the country, the factory in which he works, the economic system which sustains him. It is very easy for him to become a boss (whom he typically calls by his first name, as the ranks commonly do the Army officers), but he is still very much in the compartments of "we" and "they."

In short, what makes him a worker is the fact that he works for someone else. He knows nothing of the emotional and psychological implications of belonging to a subject class, which has so constricted the outlook of the British proletarian. He is contemptuous of authority, which has never been able to convince him that it does anything necessary or even useful, and he feels that if a man has the right qualities of independence and self-reliance he can turn his hand to any practical matter, like the stock-whip maker who announced that he had enough hide to take a crack at anything.

Nor has he, in general, any trace of the English worker's respect for the man of education, or any notion that he can "improve himself" by study. Education, if he thinks of it at all, seems to him a childish trick whereby the "bullshit artist" seeks to curry favour with the boss and thus get a better job.

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Thus, off the job, he leads the life of the senses, actively by swilling beer and betting on the horses, passively by oiling his body and lying in the sun, like a lizard. This is a pretty good life, especially when you are young: Ray Lawler's fine play, *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, shows the despair that gets hold of the ageing Australian when the time comes for him to call on the non-physical resources which he has failed to develop through all those long, sunny afternoons.

Alf and Roy

THE British migrant is such a stock feature of the Australian scene that he has to be included among the gallery of Australian types. The reception he gets has hardly changed since the days of the first "free" (that is, economically and not legally compelled) migrants of a century and more ago. The old hands and their native-born successors are inclined to regard the newcomers as cap-touching yokels, respectful of the upper orders and innocently unaware of the proper (Australian) attitude towards the boss, grudging hostility. The migrant, the British migrant in particular, has to prove his solidarity by unco-operativeness with the established order, but he must not, of course, attack the country itself or its Australianness. The trouble, for the newcomer, is that in a world without gentlemen or any obvious governors, he can't tell which is which. In many ways the non-British European migrant has an easier time of it, because the Australians take him for a benighted foreigner (exactly as an Englishman would) and will take the trouble to explain to him whom he is supposed to like and dislike.

The British migrant is also inclined to see the worst side of Australian forthrightness; believing that their attitudes are the only ones proper to the dignity and self-respect of free men, the Australians are likely to regard even common politeness as servility, and the keep-ourselves-to-ourselves of the British worker as a prison, and the man himself as a fool.

However, the British migrant, once he has made the ritual renunciation of unjust Britain which is expected of him, and has acquired the feel of the Australian community, so different from his own under the obvious similarities, is thereupon accepted as an Australian without condition or question. I have friends, British-born, who have succeeded in becoming Australians in four or five years in the country, accent and all, and have returned to Britain as free men, liberated forever from the danger of being asked where they went to school and what their fathers did for a living. Needless to say a man with imposing connections in Britain would not do this; but then, he wouldn't go to Australia in the first place.

The Australian intellectual (I mean, by this, people who are interested in ideas; I do not mean to credit him with any special wisdom) derives mainly from the worker, and shares many of his attitudes. We have all kinds, of course, of all persuasions, but in general the poverty-stricken wallet-philosophy of the Australian boss is not likely to appeal to him, and most would claim descent from our radical tradition of protest. As this drowns in prosperity, the ship is sinking under him, and this explains a lot of his current bewilderment.

The intellectual's feeling of estrangement from the present trend of our community is exacerbated as, by reading, discussion with visitors, and travel, he works towards a clearer assessment of the value of the Australian experience in world-wide terms. He quickly comes to see that the Australian business-man or big land-owner, the button-down shirt, lightweight-suit type of smoothie from the North Shore Line in Sydney or Toorak Road in Melbourne, with his spurious "taste" and "culture" (a hasty warm-up of European and American left-overs) rates very low indeed when compared with the cultivated middle classes of other countries. In current Australian terminology, this is the "Roy" type, the genuine provincial, the real victim of Australian isolation and inexperience.

On the other hand, as the intellectual sees Australia more clearly, his respect for the Australian worker, the "Alf" as we call him, grows. He realises that hardly another country in the world has a working class so free of inferiority feelings, or, worse, inverted working-class snobbery; so determined to get his share of any prosperity that is going; so impervious to the subjugating tricks of accent, style, and spurious patriotism used by practically every ruling class in the world. Alf may be ignorant, but he and his mates are freer, more resistant to exploitation than the bottom people of any other country. He can be bought, I suppose, but the price is a lot higher than a toy motor-car on H.P. and calling him "Mister."

The thoughtful Australian comes to understand that Alf's militant ignorance is one of his most powerful defences, his contempt for "bull-shit" protects him against the brow-beating so

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readily used by the boss-class of Britain and the Eastern, industrial side of the United States, whose class-demarcating "education" and manners can be bought by anyone with the money to spend at public or (in the U.S.) private schools.

Thus the Australian intellectual sees that Alf is the Australian with a valuable tradition, and he tends to line up with the intellectual Alfs against the intellectual Roys, adopting Alf's characteristic tough-mindedness, contempt for pretension and the cult of the reputation.

To illustrate: there is a shop near Circular Quay in Sydney called *"Art Nouveau."* At least once a week, some Alf comes in and asks for Mr. Nouveau. One typically persistent caller, told that there was no Mr. Nouveau, scoffed: "Don't be a galah, Art and I are old drinking cobbers. Why, Artie and I went right through the Army together!"

Needless to say, a Roy would shudder at the idea of a man who thought that Art was short for Arthur: the same Roy would patronise *Art Nouveau* every pay-day (and his wife would, if he didn't) for arty knick-knacks for his lovely Wahroongah home.

So the sensitive Australian sees with dismay the Roys proliferating, encouraged by a Roy régime and the easy prosperity which is burying the memories of hard times and putting a cake-fork into the hand of the "battler on the track," our best human type.

THUS, one of the aspects of Britain which particularly interested me was the Labour Government, which had not long run its course when I arrived, and the Welfare State. From where I was, it looked as if something really notable and encouraging had happened: the British *Alf* had finally woken up to himself, penetrated the deceptions of British super-*Roys* and the Dominics for whom the *Roys* do the dirty work, and was on the verge of coming into his kingdom. This, I thought, would give our own *Alfs* new heart, and liberate a tremendous revivifying dynamo of *Alf*-energy in Britain. There were even signs of that, too.

I am still delighted by the Welfare State as an idea, and I get my head down easier of nights for the thought that no one starves in the birth-place of industrial abundance. But I am repelled by that side of it which is just a jazzed-up version of the detestable Poor Laws which contributed such a slice to our population, which enables the better-off to ignore indefinitely the disquieting spectacle of social injustice with the comfortable thought: "They've got enough to eat and cheap teeth to eat it with, what more does anyone need?"

And the British Welfare State, despite all its meannesses, makes an interesting comparison with our own *Roy*-type imitation, which has been impudently rigged by the all-powerful Australian doctors to get their unpaid bills underwritten by the State.

We have a very good educational system, "free," as our law says, "secular and compulsory"—and our State educational system has a longer tradition than Britain's, and a good deal more esteem in our eyes than the Grammars and Secondary Moderns enjoy here. It was founded and continues to be dominated by a formidable dynasty of Scottish schoolmasters with names like Ross, Mackaness, Mackellar, Anderson, just to pick a few from my own memories. We have no nonsense of class-veneering or fitting lads for leadership, and the emphasis is on driving useful information into the skull, the cane being generously employed. The Universities continue the theme of utility, and my own, Sydney, produces every year a fine crop of scientists and technicians, more than our unimaginative industry can use, and so Britain gets an unexpected windfall of scientific manpower. Australian scientists, while perhaps lacking the romantic touch needed for really great discovery, attack their subjects in the characteristic tough-minded aggressive way, and are making a great name for themselves.

But the man who is interested in ideas themselves, without a job in view or the prospect of a saleable qualification, is regarded in Australia as a very odd bird indeed. There are no cosy hideaways like the BBC or the long-haired papers of Britain, and so the intellectual must work at something else, or take a heavy cut in his income, and the business community regards this as highly suspicious, anti-social behaviour. Alf, asleep in the sun, just isn't interested.

I want to make a distinction between the intellectual and the culture-vulture. I don't suppose I really know what a serious intellectual is, and my Australian imagination conjures up a stalk-necked young man with a cough limping out of a public library, but what I have in mind is a sincerity of purpose, a non-provincial honesty. I can certainly identify a culture-vulture, having been saddened and wearied by them all my Australian life.

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Australian "culture" is one of the nastier aspects of our peanut-minded nationalism. Australians, especially the business and administrative groups, waste a lot of time proving to themselves that Australia is a nation and, unaware that watched pots never boil, they are continually on the look-out for "Australian" art, writing, painting, architecture, and so on. This has become connected with the women's-magazine doctrine that culture is a part of every gracious home, *after* you get the two-car garage, and a flourishing industry has sprung up to give our suburban matrons a quick back-and-sides over Western civilisation. Opera-lovers abound, a sure sign of a peasant community trying to get culture the easy way. This market, I regret to report, is supplied by conscienceless painters churning out gumtree and "aboriginal" pictures (the one who supplies the aboriginal art for the railways and the Post Office is a recent arrival from Vienna, and good luck to him) and arty-crafty poets of the *Kangaroo My Totem* school:

> *But when shall I feel in my hams*
> *The inclination to hop?*

Brook or Billabong

THE attempt to force national maturity before its natural time, the incessant exhortation to walk tall, merely confuses the sensitive Australian. He wonders who he is, where he comes from, how his experience differs from that of the rest of the human species. Statistics about telephones and refrigerators answer nothing: and, indeed, it was only outside Australia that I began to realise that a high standard of consumption not merely makes life easier, it changes it profoundly and fundamentally.

For this sort of Australian, the only refuge from the infantile self-congratulation he hears around him is exile, internal or external. In order to avoid being acclaimed as the long-awaited Australian poet he is likely to write in a sober, clear, even acid style, which the culture-vultures, expecting a Messiah radiating inchoate Australianism at 150,000 volts, will not recognise as poetry at all. The novelist, unless he has been ruined by the adulation given to little fish in little ponds, commonly hides in the country and lets our shy and easily-bruised landscape work its magic on him, without rushing into a shot-gun identification. In short, the best of them have discovered that nationalism is a prison, unless you are a man first before you are the citizen and spokesman of a particular country. An exceptionally self-contained individual can isolate himself from the new-nation clamour, and make a monastery of his own personality: those who are less sure of themselves go abroad. Because so much of Australian life has been constructed on a negative principle: we are, we think, what Britain is not: Britain herself is a natural place for a personal reassessment; and Britain of the 18th century is the intellectual climate to which the Australian logically returns, being roughly the spot at which we broke off from the general European tradition and went our own way. He will return to the Australian present, of course, but by his own route.

I had all my life expected to come to Britain one day, ever since my mother read me *Christopher Robin*. I suppose a romantically-inclined British schoolboy looks forward to going to France in much the same way, and I wanted to go *there* too, which must be just another transplanted British attitude.

Australians in general are great people for "seeing the world." So little of the history I learnt happened in Australia, so much outside, especially in Britain; and being a junior member of a great earth-circling political system naturally puts one in mind of travel, of breaking out of the Australian isolation and participating in the human experience everywhere.

As well, Australians are very sensitive of their provinciality. Even the noisiest of our nationalists is only half-convinced, and nobody thinks, in the smug English or American way, that if he stays at home the world will come to him. So he must go to it.

The roots are not hard to break. I do not mean that I have no love for our earth, or for my own people, but I am not attached to any particular part of it. All colonials, I think, have somewhere in them a feeling of impermanence. I was very young indeed when I first noticed that our language, our culture-pattern, doesn't really fit our country. There is something absurd about roast dinners, hot plum pudding, and cotton-wool snow on a boiling-hot midsummer Christmas Day, and about girls named June, which is our midwinter month. This is a folding portable culture, which could be set down anywhere.

I had the same feeling about our language. At school I learnt words like *brook*, *dale*, *copse*, *spinney*, but they were like Latin words: I had never seen one. Because our landscape so little resembles Britain, we have a stripped, basic-

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English way of describing it: anything smaller than a river is a creek, anything not flat is a gully, any piece of land is a paddock, any vegetation is bush, and for features unknown outside Australia we have borrowed words like *mulga* and *billabong* from the aborigines.

I suppose words will be invented for our landscape, but it will take a long time: for a start, I was anxious to see the country to which they did apply, out of which my language had grown.

I think I first felt this impermanence deeply years ago, on a beach named Cronulla, just outside Sydney, where there is a huge aboriginal burial-midden. At the time, I didn't know what it was: it is simply a sandhill, only its perfect conical shape marking it as the work of men. But, climbing to the top, my foot disturbed a skull, and kicking the sand away revealed a dozen more.

I felt very much an intruder. Here was I, a callow, well-fed young man out walking with his girl, desecrating the bones of the shy and gentle people whom my people had chased away from this land, land to which they belonged by right of having sprung from it, named it, lived by it for long ages. As we had driven them away, someone might drive us away, and who would regret the garish neo-Victorian civilisation we had plastered over this lost and lonely country?

So I sat like some Antipodean Hamlet, with a skull in my hand, wondering what it would be like to stand on the earth which covered my own ancestors' bones, ancient and native as this skull. It seemed it would be a good place to take my bearings, to connect up with the human family, and so, I think, it has been. At least, now contemplating the aborigine's skull, I feel less like a roughneck dropped recently from some passing cloud.

This sort of feeling, connection with the earth, is very likely a commonplace to Europeans, but it means something to an Australian just because he can't do it. But, considering the past, we don't think of Britain as that happy land far, far away, and the Australian's way of describing this sort of pilgrimage is "taking a look at where the convicts came from."

In a country where the talk is all future, future, future, one is naturally inclined to suspect, perversely, that there are secrets in the past they are trying to hide from you. Indeed, looking around the Australian scene, I was impressed by its incompleteness. Here is a great industrial system, not owned by us, or invented by us; an agriculture serving and supplied by invisible markets; a flow of ideas from far-off academies, books ceaselessly impinging on us, but no contribution going back; and above all the cut-off, prison feeling, the soundproof insulation from our Asian neighbours imposed by our Government's policy, and the flood of migrants from Europe announcing "We have left all that behind us, we are starting again." This emphasises, if that were needed, that we are really the end of the line.

The truth is, Britain is part of greater Australia, without which the part in the Pacific hardly yet makes sense. The Germans probably have a word for this, something like "organic-cultural-unit." Anyway, Britain is part of ours. Thus, living in London, I don't feel that I am adopting a new nationality: on the contrary, I am getting to grips with an important part of my own. If you want proof of this, reflect that the way to success at almost anything in Australia is to be acclaimed in Britain. I won't say that this had nothing to do with my coming here, either.

Coming Home?

THE sea-voyage from Sydney to London, along the groove of Empire-building, is an impressive exhibition of British power. Colombo, Karachi, Aden, Gibraltar, are all British-built; so is the ship under you, and so are most of the ships you pass. The shock came for me with my first sight of the damp, smelly meadows and marshes around Tilbury, increased with the rattletrap train which took me to Liverpool Street, a real chamber of horrors for the traveller from a less sooty land, and culminated with my first sight of London.

It was so small.

London looked to me like the slums of Sydney (they were built around the same time). It looked, not old, but old-fashioned. The men scurrying about in slug-grey raincoats, all looking vaguely like Freddie Mills—were they the rulers of the waves?

I passed several days in this mood, wondering at the toy Underground trains, the minute Thames and its overgrown-culvert bridges. My reaction was not contempt, rather amazement that the inhabitants of this doll's-house country had done so much, and a growing admiration that indeed they had.

The fine houses and big hotels of the West End did not impress me: London luxury, based

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fundamentally on having someone clean your boots for you, is basically repulsive and guilt-provoking to someone from a mechanised society who has, moreover, good historical reasons for identifying with the bootblack. Nor, in my eyes, is a place particularly attractive because I can get in and other people can't, and with this difference in outlook three-quarters of the social goals of Britain, the privileges which people, incredibly, spend real money on, become quite meaningless to me.

The dreary wilderness of the working-class suburbs, on the other hand, moved me deeply. I am nearly all British in descent, British working-class, naturally: the hulks of the Mersey, a workhouse in Warwickshire, some damp granite croft on a stony Scottish hillside comprise my distant patrimony, with a German great-grandfather, deserted off a ship from Hamburg to go gold-mining, for that exotic Continental touch. Accordingly, I came to Britain with a real desire to make contact, in the mood of "all is forgiven." "Forgiven?" people implied, when I tried to communicate this. "What?"

The harsh life of the British worker, seen in his house, puzzled me at first. We, on the receiving end, are very impressed with the power of British industry. Where had it all gone? It all went, of course, to Australia and a hundred other places, the United States foremost, where his master had invested the British worker's sweat. My own forebears may have been horse-thieves, for all I know, but emotionally I claim a slice of Tolpuddle martyrdom for myself, and like all Australians I associate myself completely with their decision to have done with that forever. Still, I cannot make any sort of real contact with the British worker, for all my sympathy.

Part of the barrier is on his side. He regards me, like all colonials of all shades, as something the governors have foisted on him, some odd by-product of their schemes abroad which have swallowed up so much of his work.

I, for my part, have a deep-seated impatience with what seems to me his spinelessness. (I don't present this as a rational criticism, rather as an emotional attitude.) I happened to be in Stoke-on-Trent recently, and in a grimy street, opposite a terrace of cramped and very likely bathless cottages (they looked as if they might have had beaten-earth floors) was a twenty-four-sheet poster which said, "ADVERTISING HAS DONE MUCH TO CREATE YOUR HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING." There was no obscene comment scrawled on it. My immediate reaction was that people who will swallow this low-grade opium will swallow anything, and they deserve what they get.

You can imagine how I react to the well-tailored union boss who tells a ragged crowd at the mill gates, "Now, look heah, chaps, no unofficial striking." At first I thought that anyone who falls for this must be a fool. I still think so, but I understand it better now as an aspect of Britain's caste society, and this is a very puzzling thing indeed to someone from Australia's primitive economic battlefield. I have often reflected to myself that the British working class is a remnant, bled by emigration and deportation of the livelier spirits for several centuries, but there is still a barrier between myself and those who stayed behind and stuck it out.

On the other hand, I can't look at Britain as a tourist, distantly photographing the natives: the old identifications are too strong. When a group of young rowdies were sent to prison for four years for thumping coloured men at Notting Hill, my first reaction was anger: the upper orders are still solving the problems they have created themselves with their slave-trade and sugar plantations by judicially savaging rough lower-class types who don't know any better. This is a very Australian feeling, I suppose, and it goes side by side with some understanding of the black man's side of the story: we are touchy about chains and patronage, too.

Although I feel cut off from the British worker, I have even less inclination to identify in bulk with his betters. A stranger confronted with a hierarchical society, but feeling a connection with it, naturally wonders where he himself rates in it. In my case, historically speaking, it's nowhere, which is not likely to endear the system to me. Nor do I, thanks, want honorary membership a grade or two up, say eligibility for a provincial businessman's golf club: I am not disposed to suck bums for the privilege of having someone suck mine. This is a raw reaction to the system, which is, anyway, fundamentally a matter of unconscious psychology.

Everyone would, I think, feel a distaste for the man who sold his own kind out in order to be accepted into a grade higher, providing he was well above the whole thing and looked on it with detachment. I often notice this contempt in my well-connected friends as they contemplate the union boss who has exchanged militancy for a ten-horsepower car and a house on the Kingston by-pass. In short, what really revolts them is his low price. But they too, I suspect, have a more distinguished price,

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adjusted to their tastes, and so the daisy-chain society ascends in ever-diminishing exclusive circles. This seems to me a very odd sort of social carrot, accustomed as I am to the straight bribe of materialism. These keys to locked doors have to be pretty generally valued or the whole thing won't work: and what, I wonder, is the final prize, what keeps the top people in line?

I suppose it must be to mix with Britannia herself on equal terms, and this seems to me quite illusory. British snobbery seems to me fundamentally ridiculous, a silly provincial game, which has infected British intellectual life with its puerility. Noses pressed to the glass, each social class ludicrously over-values the one above, culminating in top people who have to look to the past to find people worthy to emulate.

The result is the strange British annoyance with the rest of the world for proceeding into the 20th century without permission, for constructing rival power systems, even more potent than Britain's, without the need for ruling castes, lads trained for leadership or the rest of Britain's vast load of Victorian rubbish. The industrial system won the battles: the rest is flummery.

The pervading phoniness of contemporary British life strikes me again and again. What really impresses an Australian about Britain is not British power, nor the sort of spurious tradition represented by public schools, kings and queens, and stately homes, and certainly not the obscene "luxury" of Mayfair hairdressers and London's pitiful night-clubs.

Our roots, indeed, are in the Britain of two centuries ago. What engages our affection is something quite different: British kindliness, represented in things like the Welfare State; the realism, the respect for natural justice, the sensibleness, the unfanaticism, the dignity of wielding great power with the realisation that there is a skull and a ruin at the end of it all. In short, snob and Tory as he was, the outlook of Dr. Johnson.

Thus, the parts of Britain which really move me are the slums of Birmingham and Glasgow, the human spirit in adversity. The impressive aspect of the imperial adventure is not that it was so big—there will be bigger, no doubt—but that so much was done with such slender resources. As for mere size and scope, we have plenty of those things ourselves.

Just because an Australian is, in part, an authentic part of Britain's past, he is likely to be particularly sensitive to the jarring imitation of a phoney past which strikes him in contemporary Britain. Returning in search of the Britain of Dr. Johnson, he finds the Britain of Gilbert Harding: a century of Victorian social jerry-building lies between. It is easy to see through the stucco sprayed on the walls of Greystones, and not much more difficult to penetrate the loathsome side of British snobbery. Dr. Johnson's snobbery was much nearer ours, an acknowledgment of the realities of power underneath a great name or a famous building: the present-day kind, veneration of a crowd of superannuated dim-wits and hangers-on descended from a power system which has long since departed, seems merely silly.

The fundamental distinction is that our society is economic, closely related to productive function; whereas Britain's economy is still irrationally very social, a power structure imposed on the economy, not by the present reality of ability but by the fossilised hang-over of a past economic order. The defect of ours is the jungle for the top jobs; the defect of Britain's is too little jungle, the inevitable discovery that a well-connected incompetent is in charge just when the crisis bursts. After a study of both, I prefer ours, on the view that defeat and disillusionment in a materialist society is less destructive than the beaten-before-I-was-born hopelessness of a snobbish one.

I AM often asked about Australian reactions to the economic and cultural penetration of all the English-speaking countries by the United States. We have a natural interest in another liberated former British colony, and direct connections going back a long way, particularly on the radical side: the I.W.W. made quite an impact on Australian politics, and we have had a steady exchange, only tapering off recently, of radicalism carried by American ships, the exchange which gave America Mr. Khrushchev's Australian-born friend, Harry Bridges, in return for such worthies as King O'Malley, American founder of a branch of our own Labour Party. As yet, American capital has not been very conspicuous in the Australian scene, even since the war being only a small fraction of British investment.

We are quite free of the envy of American wealth and success which strikes such a nasty note in Britain, particularly among the *Daily Express* middle class. What is there to envy? Our country is as big, our consumption very

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nearly as great, our outlook even more forthright and we share the cosiness of few hatreds and much room. We, too, are on our way. America is the great power in the Pacific, *mare nostrum*, and we recognise it in a classically British hard-headed way.

The first American I ever saw in my life, in the flesh, was an Army sergeant who was standing on a corner in King's Cross in Sydney in 1943 flourishing a bottle of whiskey and asking every girl who passed, "You got a shack, honey? You got a shack?" We had up to two million American soldiers pass through Australia during the war, and most Australians were captivated by their easy manners, like our own, and the fun they had with the English language, which we also enjoy. They did not, however, unsettle anybody in Australia by their attitude of one-man-is-as-good-as-another, as they did the working classes of European countries, including Britain. On the contrary, I think we may have unsettled some of *them*, particularly the Negroes, who found themselves being treated as Americans, perhaps for the first time.

The relationship is best illustrated by the parental image. America, to us, is the elder brother, success to be emulated, mistakes to be avoided. Britain is old, bent, and stooped Mum: we think of her in *super-ego* terms, the ultimate source of our values, the nod of encouragement and the stern look of disapproval, compared with the lush, permissive *id*-desires which we feel radiating from American opulence and self-gratification. Thus we adopt American words and ideas without much inhibition, or feeling of loss of dignity, but without any particular eagerness because they are American. Personal contact with Americans makes us feel British; but I often find myself expounding American mysteries to British friends. The idea I sometimes hear that Australia is an Americanised bit of Britain is hopelessly artificial.

ALTHOUGH an Australian is unlikely ever to feel completely at home in Britain, because to do so it is necessary to identify with some or other class, the same state of affairs gives him tremendous opportunities. English company, in particular, generally makes an Australian uneasy, especially on first acquaintance, because the class attitudes displayed touch deep emotions in him, and the middle-class people he is likely to have dealings with try in a thousand unconscious ways to include him under the umbrella of their narrow and provincial class-outlook. But the Australian soon discovers that he is making the English just as uneasy: they don't know how to place him, and generally tolerate deviations of manner they never would from a compatriot. I have English friends who habitually use obscene language in front of me to make me feel at home, and I am grateful for their thoughtfulness, even if misplaced. But the freedom with which an Australian can move from group to group, once he opens his mouth and his nationality is clear, makes Britain a comfortable place to live and softens the harshness of exile. I have been asked how we keep the lower orders in their place in Australia, in full seriousness, and on another occasion a bus conductor has told me how he outwits the toffs and makes them feel small on the Knightsbridge section of his route. This is a bird's-eye view of England which I suppose few of the native-born and -branded can get. The same rule, and the natural kindliness of the British, gives a young Australian agreeable sexual opportunities in London which alone would make the trip worthwhile.

And I would be misrepresenting my own attitudes if I failed to make clear that, despite the reservations, I have a great affection for this country, much-trodden shoal in the mouth of the Rhine, and its people, source of our history, our speech, our personality, our existence.

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Five poems by Kingsley Amis

The Huge Artifice

An Interim Assessment

Enough of this great work has now appeared
For sightings to be taken, the ground cleared,
Though the main purpose—*what it's all about*
In the thematic sense—remains in doubt,
And it seems certain, even at this stage,
That seriousness adequate to engage
Our deepest critical concern is not
To be found here. First: what there is of plot
Is thin, repetitive, leaning far too much
On casual meetings, parties, fights and such,
With that excessive use of coincidence
Which marks authorial inexperience.
We note, together with many signs of haste,
A great deal in most questionable taste:
Too many sex-scenes, far too many coarse
Jokes, most of which have long lost all their force.

It might be thought that, after a slow start,
Abundant incident made amends for art,
But the work's "greatness" is no more than size,
While the shaping mind, and all that that implies,
Is on a trivial scale, as can be guessed
From the brash nature of the views expressed
By a figure in an early episode, who
Was clearly introduced in order to
Act as some kind of author-surrogate,
Then hastily killed off; an unfortunate
Bid to redress a grave strategic lapse.

More damaging than any of this, the gaps
In sensitivity betrayed are vast.
Concepts that have not often been surpassed
For affectation, downright nastiness
And ignorance—that poverty is less
Fatal than self-love, that corruption runs
Like pox through families, that the lucky ones
Will stay lucky—such are not only forced
Anywhere into dialogue, but endorsed
By the scheme of action, manifesting there
An inhumanity beyond despair.

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One final point remains. It has been urged
That a few characters are not quite submerged
In all this rubbish, that they can display
Reason, justice and forethought on their day,
And that this partly exculpates the mind
Which was their author. Not at all. We find
Many such in the history of art
(So this reviewer feels) who stand apart,
Who by no purpose but their own begin
To struggle free from a crude origin.

Nothing to Fear

All fixed: early arrival at the flat
Lent by a friend, whose note says *Lucky sod*;
Drinks on the tray; the cover-story pat
And quite uncheckable; her husband off
Somewhere with all the kids till six o'clock
(Which ought to be quite long enough);
And all worth while: face really beautiful,
Good legs and hips, and as for breasts—my God.
What about guilt, compunction and such stuff?
I've had my fill of all that cock;
It'll wear off, as usual.

Yes, all fixed. Then why this slight trembling,
Dry mouth, quick pulse-rate, sweaty hands,
As though she were the first? No, not impatience,
Nor fear of failure, thank you, Jack.
Beauty, they tell me, is a dangerous thing,
Whose touch will burn, but I'm asbestos, see?
All worth while—it's a dead coincidence
That sitting here, a bag of glands
Tuned up to concert pitch, I seem to sense
A different style of caller at my back,
As cold as ice, but just as set on me.

Sight Unseen

As I was waiting for the bus
  A girl came up the street,
Detectable as double-plus
  At seven hundred feet.

Her head was high, her step was free,
  Her face a lyric blur,
Her waist was narrow, I could see,
  But not the rest of her.

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At fifty feet I watched her stop,
Bite at a glove, then veer
Aside into some pointless shop,
Never to reappear.

This happens every bloody day:
They about-turn, they duck
Into their car and belt away,
They hide behind a truck.

Look, if they knew me—understood,
There might be cause to run;
Or if they saw me, well and good;
And yet they don't, not one.

Love at first sight: by this we mean
A stellar entrant thrown
Clear on the psyche's radar-screen,
Recognised before known.

All right—things work the opposite
Way with the poles reversed;
It's galling, though, when girls omit
To switch the set on first.

Science Fiction

What makes us rove that starlit corridor
May be the impulse to meet face to face
Our vice and folly shaped into a thing,
And so at last ourselves; what lures us there
Is simpler versions of disaster:
A web confounding time and space,
A world of ocean without shore,
A sentence to perpetual journeying,
And simplest, flapping down the poisoned air,
A ten-clawed monster.

In him, perhaps, we see the general ogre
Who rode our ancestors to nightmare,
And in his habitat their maps of hell;
But climates and geographies soon change,
Spawning mutations none can quell
With silver sword or necromancer's ring,
Worse than their sires, of wider range,
And much more durable.

Terrible Beauty

Hearing how tourists, dazed with reverence,
Look through sun-glasses at the Parthenon,
I thought of that cold night outside the Gents
When Dai touched Gwyneth up with his gloves on.

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F. R. Allemann

To the Summit, Anxiously

Letter from Berlin

WITH the "Western summit meeting" which brought the four leading statesmen of the four leading Western powers together in Paris before Christmas the diplomacy of the free world did indeed attain a summit: the summit of frivolity. This is not meant in any spirit of invective; it describes precisely, I think, what took place in the French capital between the 19th and 21st of December. Eisenhower, Macmillan, de Gaulle, and Adenauer found it easy enough to bring the conference to an end: half the time originally planned was sufficient to establish agreement. But the agreement was beside the point. It was obvious that none of the participants had come with any intention of discussing serious differences of opinion; they were quite content to paste a paper façade of agreement over their disagreement. That is why no one need be surprised that this outward show of understanding hardly lasted more than a few weeks: the heads of State and Government had scarcely turned their backs before the "agreement" they had been congratulating each other on so complacently was in tatters.

Certainly, resolutions were carried in Paris. But what meaning did they have? It had been clear since the communiqué on the conversations at Camp David that it would be impossible to avoid sitting down at a table with Khrushchev. The time and place of the inevitable meeting could have been arranged just as easily through diplomatic channels: there was no need for big names (and in fact the diplomats had to take over afterwards because not even the Paris proposal for a date had been prepared with the necessary care). The only matter that had to be agreed on was the nature of the forthcoming conference with the Kremlin leader: should it be a single and extraordinary meeting, happening only once, or should it be the prelude to a whole series? There had been a great deal of argument about this before Paris. In Paris it turned out, however, that the problem had really been settled already—not because there was unanimity about the prospects of "summit diplomacy" but because the Americans and the British, the French and the Germans, had come to the same conclusion from different directions. The British (and to some extent the Americans too) regard a series of summit conferences as the logical consequence of their policy of "relaxation." If it is considered feasible to attain a *modus vivendi* with Moscow on the controversial problems of world politics, then it would seem a good idea to create a more or less permanent body that would be in a position to mark out the sphere of common interests step by step and reduce, or at any rate modify, the existing differences. After the experience of the last fifteen years the West has come to see, however, that such agreements can be reached only in direct contact with the only man who, as Prime Minister and Party Secretary, is in a position really to commit the U.S.S.R. What sense, therefore, in reviving the Council of Foreign Ministers of the "Big Four"? If the time has come to try and solve the problems of the divided world by means of more or less regular contacts between East and West, then it is obvious that the negotiations should be transferred to "the highest level."

De Gaulle originally had a different idea. He had in mind a single, large-scale, carefully prepared meeting in the style of the Vienna (or perhaps the Berlin) Congress which would work out a "global" arrangement for at least a period of several years. In the end, however, even the French statesman realised that the time was simply not ripe for such an ambitious enterprise.

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As he has meanwhile agreed to a separate meeting with Khrushchev he will have a chance to discuss specifically French interests in direct conversation with the Soviet leader before the conversations of the Big Four begin. He readily agreed, therefore, to meet American and British wishes on this point.

The fact that the German Chancellor also gave his blessing to the meeting was probably due to different considerations. Since he does not believe that peaceful co-existence with the Soviets, in the sense of a liquidation of the cold war, is possible, he cares little for the idea of a "world-directorium" of the great powers—and this is the end towards which the Americans and British and ultimately the French summit ambitions are aimed. Adenauer refuses to entertain even remotely the idea that it is possible to work towards a "permanent settlement," or even setting up rules and regulations for an East-West competition. But even he cannot avoid facing the reality of the tendencies which have been accepted almost completely in London and, to a considerable extent, in Washington as well. Even if he regards the Anglo-American hopes as sheer illusion, he cannot afford to oppose them directly, unless he is to run the danger of hopelessly isolating the Federal Republic from its Western allies. He is therefore forced to play for time by cultivating a line which strives to avoid making irrevocable decisions at almost any price. For this reason he has no use for the kind of conference which would impose such decisions from the outset. In the end, therefore, he too had to admit that it would be more favourable to offer the Russians "a whole series of conferences"—in the hope that it might thus be possible to prevent them from imposing a definitive agreement on Berlin in May or even threatening once again to "conclude a separate peace with East Germany," if the West was not prepared to conclude an immediate peace treaty with "the two German States."

THE Paris decision to hold "a series of summits" resulted almost automatically from the coincidence between Anglo-American optimism and Bonn's pessimism. But the question as to how the West should act at the very first of these meetings was left entirely open. The allies were content to adumbrate a starting position on one single point: the Berlin problem. And this position has proved meanwhile to be illusory, as has emerged from the controversy on Adenauer's recent address to the Berlin Parliament. By merely repeating its declarations on Berlin of December 1958, the West carefully evaded the task of drawing conclusions from the actual development of the dispute. But this cannot be undone simply by ignoring it. It was quite inevitable that the mere repetition of declarations (which had been overtaken by events) would be recognised as an empty gesture the moment someone appeared to take the rhetoric seriously. Once the German Chancellor in Berlin interpreted the Paris decisions as he had obviously himself understood them, it became clear that this understanding had been a misunderstanding: the differences of opinion which had become apparent to the attentive observer after the Geneva Conference of foreign ministers now became more harshly and menacingly evident than ever.

In assessing these differences, however, a distinction must be made between their diplomatic surface and their political essence. If it was merely "a matter of tactics," as it would seem to be on the surface, it would be difficult to understand either Bonn's uneasiness, Washington's embarrassment, or London's annoyance. It is not true at all that the differences arose from the question as to whether or not the last Geneva proposals of the Western powers could provide the basis for an "interim agreement" with the Soviets on Berlin. Certainly the proposals, which would involve the limitation and possibly the "symbolic" reduction of the Western occupying forces in the Berlin exclave, a limitation of "hostile propaganda" and guarantees against the storing of atomic weapons in Berlin, do contain some problematical elements. In particular, the propaganda clause, however it was worded in the end, would inevitably contain the seeds of fresh difficulties, disputes, and mutual recrimination. Perhaps that is realised more clearly in Bonn and Berlin than in the Western capitals. All the same, these concessions have not been rejected as "intolerable" *a priori* (not even on the German side). It is true that they go to the utmost limit of what the Bonn Government and the Berlin Senate regard as a feasible compromise in the circumstances but it can hardly be doubted that, if necessary, Bonn and Berlin would accept an agreement of that kind and would not put any obstacles in its way.

The German misgivings in fact arise from a different source. If the *Bundeskanzler* refuses to countenance the possibility of the Paris conference simply carrying on from where the Geneva conference finished, this does not mean

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that he seriously believes that it is possible to ignore the Geneva formulæ. What he wants to avoid is the kind of Western tactic which would make it possible for the Soviets to establish as "irrevocable facts" the offers which were made to Gromyko by the Western foreign ministers and thus to make them the basis for new and very much more extensive demands; the idea would be the ultimate acceptance of an "agreement" somewhere between the Western offer and Soviet maximal demands.

No one who is familiar with the Kremlin's diplomatic methods and is aware of the intensity of the British and American need for a "relaxation of tension" will be able to consider such fears as irrelevant or superfluous. If Adenauer asks that the West should act at the May meeting as though the Geneva conference had never taken place and the dispute was still precisely where it was a year ago, his demand is based not on the hope that it may be possible to extract from Khrushchev an agreement more favourable than that which the Americans, British, and French (and the Germans themselves) concurred to in Geneva. The "hard" tactics which he is trying to tie his allies down to are simply intended to make it clear to the Soviet leader that he cannot extort more from his partners on the Seine than his foreign minister has already obtained on the Rhône, and if possible to induce him to rest content with what he has already achieved.

To take back again what has already been offered, in order to force Khrushchev to extort it from the West again, in a hard struggle at the conference table, piece by piece—that (and *only* that) would seem the real purpose of the in itself unreal formula of regarding the Geneva

Firmness

At the Paris meeting in December, the President remarked to the other heads of state that Berlin's freedom must certainly be defended, but added that Berlin was indefensible except by an H-bomb war, which was unthinkable. This circular statement, getting exactly nowhere, would have upset and worried any man in the German Chancellor's shoes—even a much less suspicious man than Konrad Adenauer. Yet it should also be noted that Adenauer's worries about Eisenhower are quite certainly multiplied many times over by still another element in the pre-summit situation. This is the attitude of the British.

It is fashionable in many quarters here in Washington, and in Paris, and in Bonn, to condemn this British attitude with extreme severity. Certainly no one can admire the "Germans-are-beastly" campaign that is now being waged in London. It unpleasantly recalls the "Czechs-are-ghastly-people" campaign that was waged in London before Munich, which was simply the preliminary self-justification of the advocates of betrayal of Czechoslovakia.

Yet the actual British attitude on Berlin does not deserve such widespread condemnation. It starts with the President's second and third premises, that Berlin can only be defended by an H-bomb war, which is unthinkable. It goes on from there to advocate almost any kind of concession to Khrushchev, up to and including de facto *recognition of East Germany, but not including surrender of the political freedom of the West Berliners. This may be an utterly wrong attitude, as most American policy-makers passionately believe. But it is at least straightforward rather than circular, coldly logical rather than vaguely optimistic.*

The moment when this British attitude was most openly manifested was in the second round of last year's Foreign Ministers' meeting on Berlin. Not long after the Foreign Ministers reassembled at Geneva, British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd disclosed to Secretary of State Christian A. Herter new instructions which he had just received from Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. These required Lloyd to propose new concessions to the Soviet viewpoint going far beyond the West's agreed "Geneva package."

Lloyd did not act on his instructions, because Herter told him in effect: "We've just asked Khrushchev for the week-end, so you'd better wait a bit. . . ." Since then, much effort has been devoted, in all the various working groups, to make sure that the British will not do in the future, at the summit, what Lloyd so nearly did at Geneva. The American policy-makers on the working level profess to be much encouraged by the results of these efforts. Yet the strong possibility remains that, when and if the going gets rough at the summit, Prime Minister Macmillan will quickly revert to the policy outlined in his instructions to Lloyd at Geneva.

The existence of this strong possibility in turn raises some crucial questions that are as yet wholly unanswerable. What will the President do if the Western united front is broken by a sudden British retreat? Will Eisenhower also retreat, and reform his front on the line marked out by Prime Minister Macmillan? Or will Eisenhower stand firm, alone if need be, and fight the issue out on the ground he has chosen? . . . No wonder, then, that Chancellor Adenauer has come to plead for firmness, and to beg for hard commitments on the problem of Berlin.

JOSEPH ALSOP IN THE N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE

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compromise as "non-existent" and returning to the starting-point of the whole debate.

Is it very sensible to try a trick of this kind? Isn't it all too obvious, and therefore quite incapable of deceiving the enemy? *If* there were in fact a Western agreement not to transgress by an inch the limit laid down by the foreign ministers in Geneva, then it would seem more appropriate to say so clearly and openly—instead of apparently casting doubt on concessions that have already been made and subsequently putting them on the conference table again. There is, however, not the slightest evidence that there was any discussion at all in Paris on the limits of the concessions the West is prepared to make, let alone any agreement on where the limit should be drawn if the worst came to the worst. Agreement among the Western allies was "easily reached" only because they were content merely to define the point at which they intend to *begin* the discussion with the Soviets; how it is to end is still an open question.

It is only because this truly decisive and supremely relevant question was not raised at all, and because a binding answer to it was evaded altogether, that it was possible for mutual suspicions to erupt again immediately after the Paris pseudo-agreement. The German suspicion was that the British and Americans would be prepared to compromise over Berlin at the expense of the Germans; the Anglo-American suspicion was that the Germans were trying to torpedo a possible and perhaps even fruitful settlement and thereby make a relaxation of East-West tension impossible. Since the governments of the Western powers and the Bonn Republic have never made up their minds—least of all at the Paris conversations—as to what would be "acceptable in Berlin in an extreme case" and what would be "unacceptable in any case," it is not surprising that they suspect one another of exploiting the camouflage of official trivialities in order to pursue their own national political ends behind the smoke-screen of a pseudo-agreement.

Here lies the quite real danger of a diplomacy of *Als-ob*, of "As-if." It celebrated a short-lived triumph in Paris. Principles that have never been in dispute are solemnly reaffirmed; there is a fearful avoidance of any mention of the practical problems which result from the task of applying these principles in the conflict with the East. Needless to say there is a point where there would be nothing left for the British and Americans but to say *"No"* quite plainly and firmly. No one in the West could consent to an interim agreement which stipulated "the total withdrawal of Western troops from Berlin" or reduced them so greatly that their continued presence there would have a merely "symbolical" character. But what sense is there in constantly repeating that? The Soviets have intimated that they themselves consider a "demilitarisation" of Berlin (for the time being) unattainable.

Characteristically, in his last authoritative public statement on the substance of the dispute —contained in his speech to the Party Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party—Khrushchev no longer used the formula of the "demilitarised Free City," thereby intimating that he no longer regards as a subject for discussion in the present phase of negotiations the maximal programme which he expounded in the Soviet Note on Berlin of November 27th, 1958.

On the same occasion, however, as so often before and since, he also intimated that he does not on that account intend to abandon the idea of the "Free City"; that he intends, in other words, to pursue the transformation of West Berlin into a *third* German State, even though he has resigned himself to the idea that armed Western contingents could remain in this new Danzig or Trieste at least for a time.

What does all this mean? Probably that the Kremlin already considers its attempt to induce the West to surrender Berlin completely a failure. It has, however, not therefore given up the hope of extracting a spectacular, politically significant, and psychologically decisive victory from the great diplomatic tug-of-war—without a dangerous and untimely conflict with Washington, London, and Paris. It regards such a success as possible—provided it re-groups the Soviet offensive and concentrates on the one point which appears (at least at first sight) not to affect the interests of the West directly and on which the Anglo-Americans and French alike can possibly be induced to show greater tractability: namely, the relationship between Berlin and the Federal Republic.

In fact, Moscow would have achieved one of its original aims—and not the least important of them—if the Western troops were to stay (as far as possible in reduced strength) on the Spree, whilst Berlin was manœuvred out of the Federal Republic and the Federal Republic outmanœuvred out of Berlin. Thus, the outpost of free Germany in the heart of the East German Communist Republic would be reduced to an

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isolated miniature State with no other support than that of a clumsy international régime, complicated by U.N. controls. According to all present indications, that would appear to be the central theme which the East intends to put up for debate in May—and that is precisely the aspect of the problem which the West has self-consciously avoided in all its statements hitherto, and on which there has been no clear comment or expression of opinion.

In other words, in all the public, semi-public, and quasi-confidential statements in which Khrushchev's future partners at the conference table have given information about their plans for the summit, they have elegantly avoided mentioning the one point which the Soviets have singled out with ever-increasing clarity as the real heart of the problem.

For months now the Soviets have been re-arranging their strategy for the forthcoming second stage in the negotiations (though they have been careful not to expound their new and more modest aims in detail). They have intimated that they do not intend to repeat the mistake of treading on the toes of the Western powers directly; they would be content if as a reward for so much sweet reasonableness they were allowed at least to trample on the toes of the Bonn Republic. That the *Bundesrepublik* has no rights of any kind in Berlin, that it is a "provocation" for the *Bundeskanzler*, the *Bundesregierung*, and the *Bundestag* to busy themselves at all with the position and prospects of this city, that the Soviet Union will "never" admit that the "West German imperialists and militarists" have any rights there—all this has been repeated dozens of times in the last few months and developed into the real *Leitmotiv* of Soviet policy on Berlin.

AT THE moment, therefore, the East is not intent on infringing the rights of the Western powers directly, but on making impossible the "interference" of the Federal Republic in a question which in the Soviet view is not "Bonn's business" at all and in which, apart from the participants in the long since undermined Four-Power Statute, only the *D.D.R.*, the German Democratic Republic, can be admitted as an interested party. Everything suggests that the elimination of the Federal Republic from Berlin, which is the Kremlin's aim, is not the final goal but merely a stage in the course that Khrushchev has embarked on. No doubt the Kremlin will seek, sooner or later, to follow up the elimination of Western Germany with the elimination of Western influence as well—possibly by the roundabout way of a U.N. Statute. For this reason it would like, if at all possible, to set a time-limit to the envisaged "interim agreement" and not allow it to remain in force till *St. Nimmerleinstag*, i.e., the Day of German reunification. For the moment, however, it would obviously be satisfied with the destruction of West Berlin's link with Free Germany. Even if it did not cause alarm in the West, one might think that the Russians' constant harping on this point would at least have occasioned some reaction and caused the West to define its point of view on this anything but secondary problem. Nevertheless, the Moscow thesis which has been expounded so clearly has not occasioned a single reply on the part of the Western powers, let alone caused them to clarify their position. Their chancelleries behave as if this problem of the relationship between Berlin and the Federal Republic had never been raised and as though it were still simply a matter of asserting the disputed "rights of the West" in Berlin.

That is in itself disturbing. And it is bound to rouse the suspicion that Bonn's allies regard this problem (of Berlin's relationship with the Federal Republic) as unimportant, or that they are even toying with the idea of meeting Russia half-way on this matter. There is, of course, a connection between these two fears. If it is really unimportant whether Berlin is supported by the Federal Republic or not, then concessions to Moscow, aimed at removing the Federal Republic from Berlin, are perfectly justifiable. It would then be simply a matter of solving the practical problems which such an arrangement would create—such as financial aid for the city (which is quite incapable of coping with its manifold problems without subsidies from Bonn). The argument for concessions in this field is obvious: if the Allied troops remained in West Berlin, with Soviet consent, then the freedom of the Berliners would be guaranteed and secured against all surprise attacks. Under such circumstances it would be quite in order to pay for Russian consent by loosening the ties between Berlin and Bonn which are in any case "ill-defined" from a constitutional point of view.

It is remarkable that even this has never been said so far; but, then, this aspect of the problem is never mentioned in the West. There is also the point that in the past the Western allies have

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never concealed their dislike for too great a degree of integration of Berlin in the West German federation. They have tolerated the increasing Berlin-Bonn collaboration, but they have never identified themselves with it explicitly. The Russians are naturally well aware of this and reckon that they stand a chance of avoiding irresistible opposition if they ask for the integrating process of the last ten years to be cancelled.

The Western powers have not been alone, however, in refraining from clarifying their position in this matter. The Federal Republic itself has also shown little inclination to warn the world of the danger of Berlin becoming isolated. So far Bonn's watchword has been "let sleeping dogs lie": it is better to let things come and happen than provoke a controversy with an unforeseeable result. In the past there was something to be said for this attitude. It is at least arguable that the Berliners' insistence on a *full* measure of integration in the Federal Republic and the raising of Berlin to the status of the *Eleventh Land* in the West German federation were not particularly shrewd from a tactical point of view. (There have been, though, several opportunities in the past ten years when it would have been possible to establish the legal status of the city or at any rate its three Western sectors, more securely.) To-day, however, the issue is not whether the question should be raised or not. It has been raised, and the dogs are not asleep: they are barking, and barking very audibly.

IF THE West continues to be silent, if it fails to make a clear, straightforward declaration on the Soviet demand for the destruction of Berlin's link with the Federal Republic, if the central theme continues to be avoided, now that the East has placed it on the agenda in the most categorical form conceivable, then this can no longer be regarded as a sign of "wise statesmanlike restraint," but only as a timid evasion of decisions which it is no longer possible to evade.

It was profoundly disturbing to see how Willy Brandt's recent speech (in which he tried to make the danger clear) was universally applauded but subsequently ignored in the foreign policy debate of the Federal Parliament. Neither the Government nor the Opposition spokesmen attempted to take up or consider the problem which the Lord Mayor of Berlin had placed before the *Bundestag*. For the umpteenth time they merely trotted out the old differences of opinion on the general course of German foreign policy and completely evaded the duty of commenting on the new situation in which this policy has to operate.

If I may make a final summing-up (the more the facts are ignored, the more they have to be repeated): it is now no longer a question of whether the Western powers will continue to be able to protect the freedom of Berlin with their troops. Nor is the central issue any longer who is to exercise control over the lines of communication which pass through the East German Democratic Republic to Berlin. The issue at the heart of the struggle for the old capital of the *Reich* is whether the free part of Berlin is to remain a part of Free Germany, or whether it is to be separated from Free Germany under the glass cover of a dubious autonomy and be conserved as an artificial structure till the moment comes when the Russians feel strong enough to enforce their "final solution."

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Michael Anthony

Sandra Street

MR. BLADES, the new teacher, was delighted with the compositions we wrote about Sandra Street. He read some aloud to the class. He seemed particularly pleased when he read what was written by one of the boys from the other side of the town.

"Sandra Street is dull and uninteresting," the boy wrote. "For one half of its length there are a few houses and a private school (which we go to) but the other half is nothing but a wilderness of big trees"—Mr. Blades smiled from the corners of his mouth and looked at those of us who belonged to Sandra Street. "In fact," the boy wrote, "it is the only street in our town that has big trees, and I do not think it is a part of our town at all because it is so far and so different from our other streets."

The boy went on to speak of the gay attractions on the other side of the town, some of which, he said, Sandra Street could never dream to have. In his street, for instance, there was the savannah where they played football and cricket, but the boys of Sandra Street had to play their cricket in the road. And to the amusement of Mr. Blades who also came from the other side of the town, he described Sandra Street as a silly little girl who ran away to the bushes to hide herself.

Everyone laughed except the few of us from Sandra Street, and I knew what was going to happen when school was dismissed, although Mr. Blades said it was all a joke and in fact Sandra Street was very fine. I didn't know whether he meant this or not for he seemed very much amused and I felt this was because he came from the other side of the town.

He read out a few more of the compositions. Some of them said very nice things about Sandra Street but those were the ones written by ourselves. Mr. Blades seemed delighted about these, too, and I felt he was trying to appease us when he said that they showed up a new character of the beauty of Sandra Street. There were only a few of us who were appeased, though, and he noticed this and said all right, next Tuesday we'll write about the other side of the town. This brought fiendish laughter from some of us from Sandra Street, and judging from the looks on the faces of those from the other side of the town, I knew what would happen next Tuesday, too, when school was dismissed. And I felt that whatever happened it wasn't going to make any difference to our side or to the other side of the town.

Yet the boy's composition was very truthful. Sandra Street was so different from the other streets beyond. Indeed, it came from the very quiet fringes and ran straight up to the forests. As it left the town there were a few houses and shops along it, and then the school, and after that there were not many more houses, and the big trees started from there till the road trailed off to the river that bordered the forests. During the day all was very quiet except perhaps for the voice of one neighbour calling to another, and if some evenings brought excitement to the schoolyard, these did very little to disturb the calmness of Sandra Street. Nor did the steel-band gently humming from the other side of the town. I had to remember the steel-band because although I liked to hear it I had to put into my composition that it was very bad. We had no steel-bands in Sandra Street and I thought I could say this because we were decent, cultured folk and didn't like the horrible noises of steel-bands.

I sat in class recalling the boy's composition again. Outside the window I could see the women coming out of the shops. They hardly passed each other without stopping to talk and this made me laugh. For that was exactly what the boy had written—that they couldn't pass

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without stopping to talk, as if they had something to talk about.

I wondered what they talked about. I did not know. What I did know was that they never seemed to leave Sandra Street to go into the town. Maybe they were independent of the town. I chuckled a triumphant little chuckle because this, too, would be good to put into my composition next Tuesday.

Dreamily I gazed out of the window. I noticed how Sandra Street stood away from the profusion of houses. Indeed, it didn't seem to belong to the town at all. It stood off, not proudly, but sadly, like one desiring peace and rest. I felt all filled-up inside. Not because of the town in the distance, but of this strange little road. It was funny, the things the boy had written. He had written in anger what I thought of now in joy. He had spoken of the pleasures and palaces on the other side of the town. He had said why they were his home sweet home. As I looked at Sandra Street I knew too, why it was my home sweet home. It was dull and uninteresting to him but it meant so much to me. It was—

"Oh!" I started, as the hand rested on my shoulder.

"It's recess," said Mr. Blades.

"Oh—yes, Sir." The class was surging out into the playground. I didn't seem to have heard a sound before.

Mr. Blades looked at me and smiled. "What are you thinking of?" he said.

He seemed to be watching inside me. Inside my very mind. I stammered out a few words which even if they were clear wouldn't have meant anything. I stopped. He was still smiling quietly at me. "You are the boy from Sandra Street?" he said.

"Yes, Sir."

"I thought so," he said.

WHAT happened on the following Tuesday after school was a lot worse than what had ever happened before, and it was a mystery how the neighbours didn't complain or Mr. Blades didn't get to hear of it. We turned out to school the next morning as if all had been peaceful and truly there was no sign of the battle save the little bruises which were easy to explain away.

We kept getting compositions to write. Mr. Blades was always anxious to judge what we wrote but none gave him as much delight as those we had written on Sandra Street. He had said that he knew the other side of the town very well and no one could fool him about that, but if any boy wrote anything about Sandra Street he would have to see. And when he had said that he had looked at me and I was very embarrassed. I had turned my eyes away, and he had said that when the mango season came he would see the boy who didn't speak the truth about Sandra Street.

Since that day I was very shy of Mr. Blades and whenever I saw him walking towards me I turned in another direction. At such times there would always be a faint smile at the corners of his mouth.

I stood looking out of the school window one day thinking about this and about the compositions when again I felt a light touch and jumped.

"Looking out?" Mr. Blades said.

"Yes, Sir."

He stood there over me and I did not know if he was looking down at me or looking outside, and presently he spoke.

"Hot, eh?"

"Yes," I said.

He moved in beside me and we both stood there looking out of the window. It was just about noon and the sun was blazing down on Sandra Street. The houses stood there tall and almost sombre and there seemed to be no movement about save for the fowls lying in the shadows of the houses. As I watched this a certain sadness came over me and I looked over the houses across to the hills. Suddenly my heart leaped and I turned to Mr. Blades, but I changed my mind and did not speak. He had hardly noticed that I looked up at him. I saw his face looking sad as his eyes wandered about the houses. I felt self-conscious as he looked at the houses for they were no longer new and the paint had been washed off them by the rains and they had not been re-painted. Then, too, there were no gates and no fences around them as there were in the town, and sometimes with great flurry a hen would scamper from under one house to another leaving dust behind in the hot sun.

I looked at Mr. Blades. He was smiling faintly. He saw me looking at him. "Fowls," he said.

"There are no gates," I apologised.

"No, there are no gates," and he laughed softly to himself.

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"Because——" I had to stop. I didn't know why there were no gates.

"Because you did not notice that before."

"I noticed that before," I said.

Looking sharply at me he raised his brows and said slowly, "You noticed that before, did you put that in your composition? You are the boy from Sandra Street, are you not?'

"There are more from Sandra Street——"

"Did you notice the cedar grove at the top?" he went on. "You spoke of the steel-band at the other side of the town, did you speak of the river? Did you notice the hills?"

"Yes."

"Yes?" His voice grew sterner and more acid. His eyes seemed burning up from within.

"You noticed all this and you wrote about Sandra Street without mentioning it, eh? How many marks did you make?"

"Forty-five."

He looked surprised. "I gave you forty-five for writing about steel-band noises and the dirty trams of the town? Look!" he pointed, "do you see?"

"Mango blossoms," I said, feeling to cry out, "I wanted to show it to you."

"Did you write about it."

"No." I just wanted to break out and run away from him.

He bent down to me. His face looked harder now, though kind, but I could see there was fury inside him.

"There is something like observation, Steve," he said. "Observation. You live in Sandra Street. Yet Kenneth writes a composition on your own place better than you."

"He said Sandra Street was soppy," I cried.

"Of course he said it was soppy. It was to his purpose. He comes from the other side of the town. What has he got to write on? Gaudy houses with gates like prisons around them? High walls cramping the imagination? The milling crowd with faces impersonal as stone hurrying on buses, hurrying off trams? Could he write about that? He said Sandra Street was soppy. Did you prove it wasn't so? Where is your school and his, for instance?"

I was a little alarmed. Funny how I didn't think of that point before. "Here," I said, "in Sandra Street."

"Did you mention that?"

Mercifully, as he was talking, the school bell sounded. The fowls, startled, ran out into the hot sun across the road. The dust rose, and above the dust, above the houses, the yellow of mango blossom caught my eye.

"The bell, Sir."

"Yes, the bell's gone. What is it, Geography?"

"Yes, Sir." And as I turned away he was still standing looking out into the road.

IT WAS long before any such thing happened again. Though often when it was dry and hot I stood at the window looking out. I watched the freedom of the fowls between the tall houses, and sometimes the women talked to each other through the windows and smiled. I noticed, too, the hills which were now streaked with the blossoms of the poui, and exultantly I wondered how many people observed this and knew it was a sign of the rains. None of the mango blossom could be seen now, for they had already turned into fruit, and I knew how profuse they were because I had been to the hills.

I chuckled to myself. There is something like observation, Steve! And how I wished Mr. Blades would come to the window again that I could tell him what lay between the mango trees in the hills.

I knew that he was not angry with me. I realised that he was never angry with any boy because of the parts the boy came from. We grew to like him for he was very cheerful, though mostly he seemed dreamy and thoughtful. That is except at composition time.

He really came to life then. His eyes would gleam as he read our compositions, and whenever he came to a word he did not like he would frown and say any boy was a sissy to use such a word. And if a composition pleased him he would praise the boy and be especially cheerful with him, and the boy would be proud and the rest of us would be jealous and hate him.

I was often jealous. Mr. Blades had a passion for compositions and I was anxious to please him to make up for that day at the window. I was anxious to show him how much I observed and often I noted new things and put them into my compositions. And whenever I said something wonderful I knew it because of the way Mr. Blades would look at me, and sometimes I thought he would talk to me aside. But many weeks ran out before we spoke at the window again.

I didn't start this time because I was expecting him. I had been watching him from the corners of my eyes.

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"The sun's coming out again," he said.

"It's cloudy," I said.

The rains had almost ceased but there were still great patches of dark cloud in the sky. When the wind blew they moved slowly and clumsily but if the sun was free of one there would be another. The sun was shining brightly now, although there was still a slight drizzle of rain, and I could smell the steam rising from the hot pitch and from the galvanised roofs.

"Rain falling, sun shining," Mr. Blades said. And I remembered what they said about that and I smiled, and when Mr. Blades pressed me to tell I laughed and would not say. Then thoughtfully he said, "You think they're all right?"

"What, Sir?"

"In the 'mortelle root."

I was astonished. I put my hands to my mouth. How did he know?"

He smiled down at me. "You won't be able to jump over now!"

And the whole thing was revealed. I couldn't help laughing. I had put into my composition how I went into the hills last Sunday evening and how the mango trees were laden with small mangoes, some full, and how there were banana trees among the immortelles and the poui. I had spoken, too, about the bunch of green bananas I had hidden to ripen and how afterwards I had jumped across the river to the other bank.

"They're all right," I said, and I pretended to be watching the steam rising from the hot pitch.

"I like bananas," said Mr. Blades. I was sure that he licked his lips as he looked towards the hills.

I was touched. I felt as one with him. I liked bananas too. They always made me lick my lips. I thought of the whole bunch which must be yellow by now between the immortelle roots.

"Sir——" I said to him, and hesitated. Then I took the wild chance. And when he answered a feeling of extreme happiness swept over me.

I REMEMBER that evening as turning out bright, almost blinding. The winds had pushed away the heavy clouds and the only evidence of the rains were the little puddles along Sandra Street. I remember the hills as being strange in an enchanted sort of way, and I felt the enchantment came mainly from Mr. Blades being with me. We watched the leaves of the cocoa gleaming with the moisture of the rains, and Mr. Blades confessed he never thought there was so much cocoa in the hills. We watched the cyp, too, profuse between the laden mango trees, and the redness of their rain-picked flowers was the redness of blood.

We came to the immortelle tree where I had hidden the bananas. I watched to see if Mr. Blades licked his lips. He wasn't even watching. I bent down and pulled the covering of thrash from the bunch.

"Sir!" I cried in happy surprise. Mr. Blades was gazing across the trees. I raised my eyes. Not far away Sandra Street swept by bathed in light.

"The bananas, Sir," I said.

"Bananas!" he cried. "Bananas are all you see around you, Steve?"

I was puzzled. I thought it was that we had come to the hills for.

Mr. Blades looked at me. I had never seen him so shaken, so defeated.

"Good heavens!" he cried. "To think that *you* instead of Kenneth should belong to Sandra Street!"

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ART

Kasimir Malevich

By DAVID SYLVESTER

RUSSIAN artists, until the second decade of this century, were always rearguard artists, as dependent in the 18th and 19th centuries upon the lead of French or of German art as they had earlier been on that of Byzantine and Persian and Italian art, followers, moreover, at a comfortable distance in time. Nevertheless, when non-figurative art came into being, Russians formed the main body of its vanguard.

The first non-figurative paintings of the free, non-geometric kind were done more or less simultaneously by two painters one of whom was working in Moscow, Larionov, the other in Munich (but he too was of course a Russian), Kandinsky. The earliest non-figurative paintings of the geometric kind were Parisian, but it was left to a Russian, Kasimir Malevich, to be the first to develop this kind of painting systematically.* Yet another Russian, Tatlin, was the first rigorously non-figurative sculptor. Furthermore, the pioneers of non-figuration in Russia quickly acquired numbers of followers, and I mean talented followers, which their counterparts in the West did not. True, there were several Parisian and German artists who by about 1915 had experimented in non-figuration, but the significant thing is how few of them worked consistently and exclusively along non-figurative lines, how few of them committed themselves to the abandonment of figuration. Most of the ground so rapidly covered between 1910 and 1920 was in fields where figuration was important—Cubism, Expressionism, Dada, proto-Surrealism, and the discoveries of Matisse and Bonnard. In Russia, however, not only were the innovators mostly non-figurative but it was not long before flourishing schools arose of painters and sculptors committed to non-figuration—and of the kind that entails the greatest degree of commitment, the geometric kind. The notorious Russian gift for taking anything to its logical conclusion surely had something to do with it. For if there was one thing conducive to the creation of this kind of art which the Russians had and the others had not, it was a will to revolution.

The connection between a love of geometric abstract forms and a faith in the possibility of creating an utopian society has often been commented on, especially in relation to Mondrian; and the connection goes back as far as Plato, who on the one hand wrote *The Republic* and on the other that passage in the *Philebus*, so dear to modern apologists for abstract art, where Socrates says

> The beauty of pure forms, I am now trying to say, is not, as the majority of people would assume, the same type of beauty as that of living creatures or even of naturalistic representations. I am referring—this is really the point—to the straight line and the circle, and indeed their derivations, lathed plane surfaces, and solids, and the constructions made with rulers and set-squares, if you understand me. For these have not a functional beauty, as other things have, but possess an innate and timeless beauty, and have certain self-contained satisfactions, quite unlike the satisfaction you get when you keep scratching an itch. Colours, too, give this sort of satisfaction.

It is natural enough that those in love with the idea of a perfect society, a closed society, to use Karl Popper's phrase, should love the perfect forms, the closed forms, of geometry. The writings of Malevich, like those of Gabo, the most articulate of the Russian abstractionists, are full of references to the need to build a new world, to tear down the old and ruined world of existing art forms, based upon natural appearances in all their untidiness, and construct a transcendent world of pure forms. It was not enough, it was useless, to try and improve existing forms: existing forms had to be liquidated, a fresh start made with the purest of ideal forms—the square and the circle and, by way of colour, black on white and white on black, and even black on black and white on white. Russian non-figurative art was the expression of a state of mind that really was revolutionary. Revolutionary and not merely rebellious, like the rebelliousness against a bourgeois society which fired the Expressionists, the Dadaists, the Sur-

* A first exhibition of his work in London was held last winter at the Whitechapel Gallery.

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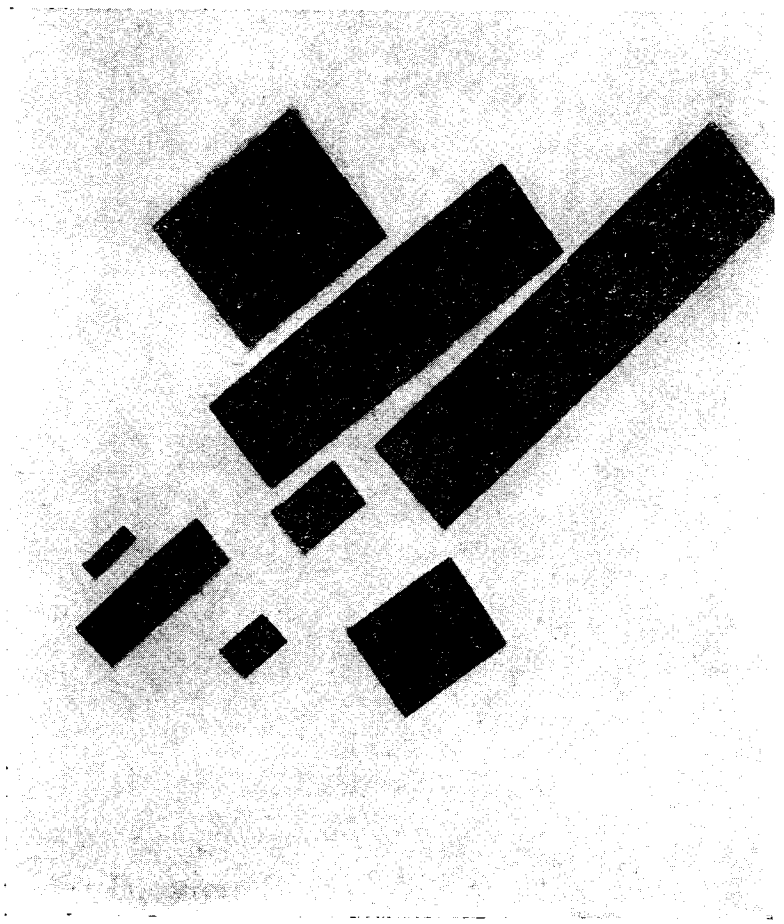
realists. These artists took conventional art forms and twisted their tails: Expressionism mauled them about, Dada sent them up, Surrealism turned them *à rebours*. They had no thought of rejecting everything in order to start afresh. They *needed* a relationship of some sort with traditional art forms, just as in life most of them needed a bourgeois environment in order to have something to rebel against. It is impossible to take the Communism of the Paris Surrealists at its face value: it was essentially the expression, not of revolutionary conviction but of anti-bourgeois feeling. I am not presuming to accuse them of bad faith, I am only suggesting that they would have been bound to be against the ruling powers and values of any society they lived in. And, indeed, Philippe Soupault, one of the two originators of the movement, recently described himself (in a broadcast interview) as a *révolté*, and went on to distinguish between the *révolté* and the *révolutionnaire*. Again, George Grosz, writing of his visit to Russia in 1922, admitted that he felt as much of a rebel there as he did at home.* The Russian abstractionists were not just rebels against the *status quo*. They positively wanted a perfect world in life as they did in art, they wanted a society which they could be on the side of. And when the Revolution came and Utopia seemed in sight, they threw themselves into sharing in the creation of that Utopia.

By the same token, their attitude towards the history of art and of their place in it was analogous to the Leninist view of history as a process of evolution towards a perfected society, but of evolution which needed revolution to help it on.

> Evolution in art moves and on [Malevich wrote in 1919] for everything in the world is moving but in art there is not always evolution, there is also revolution. Cubism and Futurism were the revolutionary forms in art prophesying the revolution in political and economic life of 1917.†

And he saw his own creation, *Suprematism*, as a further step in the evolution that "moves on and on." He didn't claim that Suprematism was the promised land, only "a definite system through which colour passes in



Eight Red Rectangles (c. 1914)

* In his "Journey to Russia, 1922," an autobiographical chapter which he omitted from his *A Little Yes and a Great Big No* (Dial Press, New York, 1946), Grosz confessed that "the mote in my eye with which I looked at the Western capitalist world I could not get rid of even in Russia. . . ." And this despite the fact that he was well received and much fêted and "we artists, ambitious as we are, succumb so easily in the presence of power. . . ." Lenin was taken by Grosz' *Gesicht der herrschenden Klasse*; Radek had his works on his writing-table; Lunacharsky offered him a leading rôle in the *Proletkult* movement. But Grosz came to the conclusion that "there was no real workers-and-peasants' interest in 'individualistic' art, and they would have much preferred to import a dozen American commercial artists to illustrate their slogans usefully and attractively. . . ."

† The passages quoted from Malevich's writings are translated by Miss Camilla Gray, to whom I am also indebted for information.

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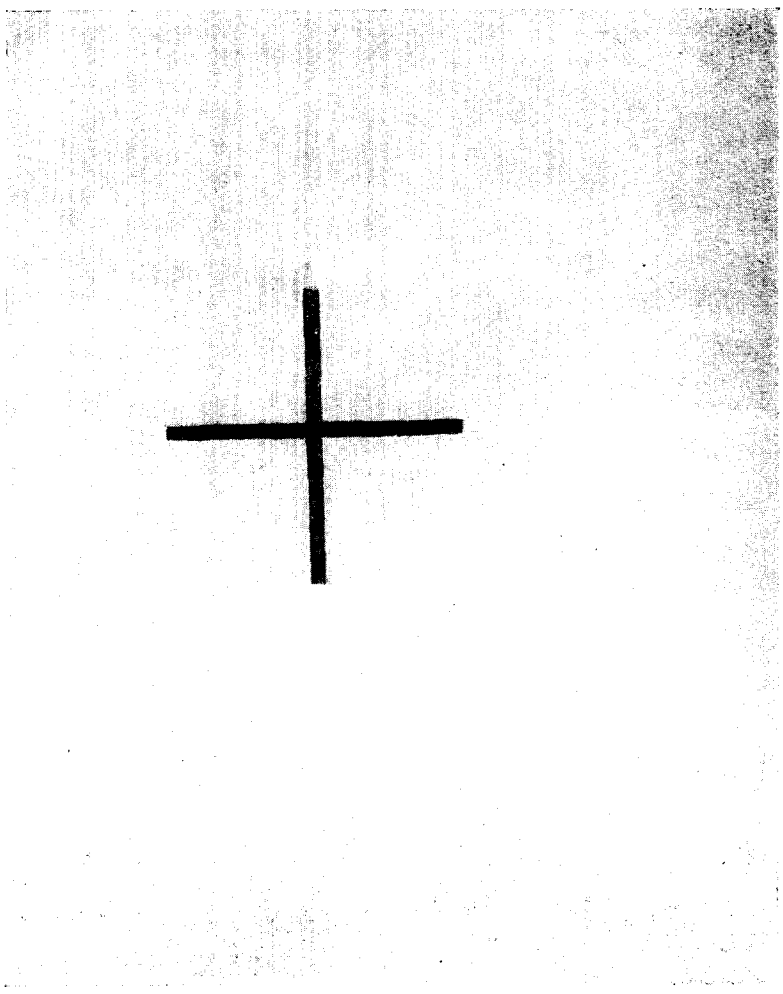
the long journey of its culture," but it is clear that he did believe it to be the closest approach yet made towards the true end and ideal of art. The name he gave it was not without significance. He defined Suprematism as "the art of pure sensation." It would, therefore, have been appropriate to call this art *Sensationism* or even *Purism* (a label not bagged by anyone else till 1918), but he preferred to use a more loaded name, meaningful only in its suggestion of the transcendent quality to which he aspired. In the same way, when he exercised his passion for drawing diagrams of the evolution of art, culminating so far in Suprematism, he didn't do the normal thing and make his diagrams read from the top to the bottom of the page or across the page from left to right: they start at the bottom of the page and work upwards. Thus we see that Suprematism is supreme. Malevich's tendency to autobiographical inaccuracy was another manifestation of his true revolutionary's intense awareness of himself as making history. For an artist like Malevich, the history of art as well as the work of art has to conform with his idea of order.

THIS preposterous (and, need I say it, endearing) character, with his potty diagrams, his juggling with dates, his scarcely literate manifestos (written, I gather, in ecclesiastical Russian), his cranky blend of Leninism and mysticism, was one of the most distinguished as well as one of the most original artists of his time. His great qualities first came to the surface about 1913, when he was thirty-five, for example in his *Large Cubist Rose*, a powerful and mysterious image suggestive as much of a human head as of a rose and conveying a sense of compactness and inwardness apt for head or rose. This painting seems to draw on the stage of Analytical Cubism exemplified by Picasso's *L'Arlésienne* of 1912, but arrives at a more sculptural configuration of planes which strikingly anticipates Gabo's famous cardboard construction of a head made in 1915. There is nothing as original as this among the Synthetic-Cubist paintings which followed and which are closely derivative from Picasso's *papiers collés*. All the same, they have an architectural crispness which makes them outstanding among minor Cubist works.

In 1915 Malevich jettisoned all reference to the objective world (the date he himself gave was 1913; the later date proposed by Miss Camilla Gray is admittedly based on reasoning as well as documented fact, but the reasoning seems sound enough). It is remarkable how quick he was to produce brilliant results. Only once or twice had he previously given evidence of more than a fine minor talent. Furthermore, considering that he was both highly obsessional and somewhat stupid, one might have expected that his energies would have been wholly



Small Thin Cross on White (c. 1916

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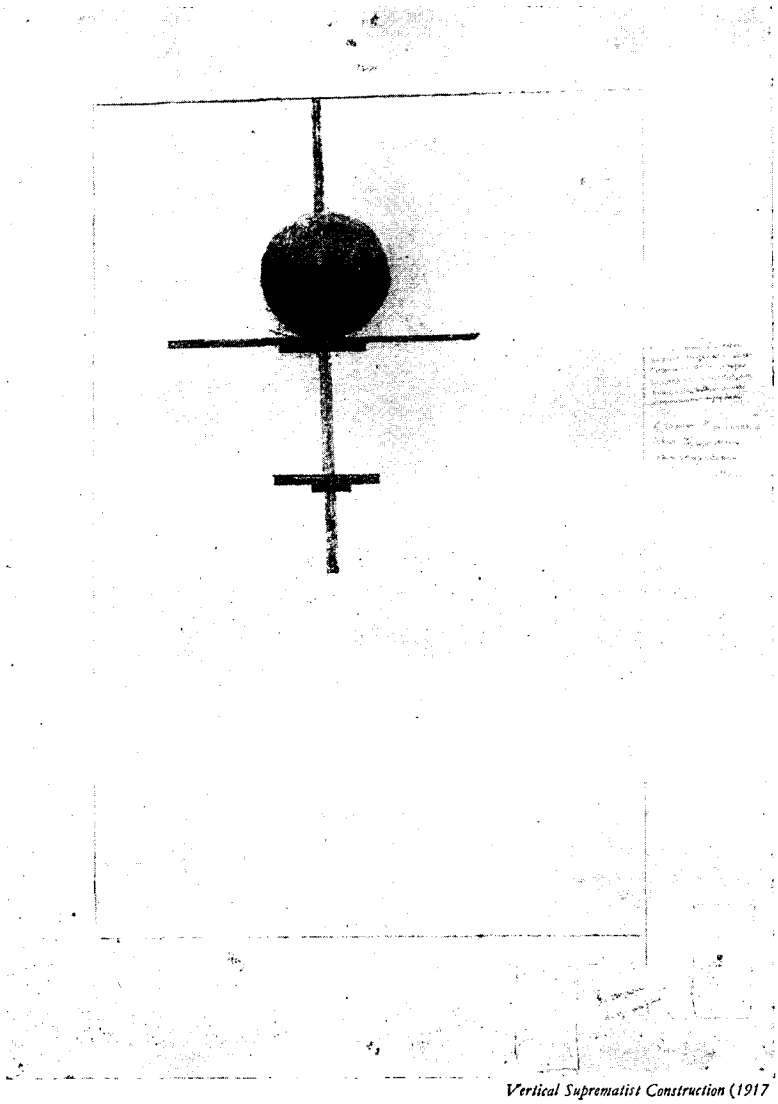
absorbed for a time by the stroke of theoretical genius which made him produce a picture of a black square on a white ground, one might have expected a whole succession of black squares on white grounds. In fact, he rapidly envisaged an extraordinary range of possibilities offered by the idea of combining quadrilaterals of various shapes, colours, and sizes on a white ground (keeping the forms separate at first but later tending to make them overlap). And from the outset there was not only a surprising range but a surprising authority. Of course these paintings don't have the density of Mondrian's, their strength and grandeur. Yet they have a richer vitality. The effect upon us of a Mondrian—and I do mean a Mondrian of any period—is almost wholly visual, that of a Malevich more plastic. As we look at a Mondrian, the rigid rectilinear forms gradually come alive: lines shuttle back and forth like a piston; there is a blinking and a flashing where lines intersect; lines bend, then straighten, bend again: everything is jumping where we thought it static. But this adventure only happens to our eyes: our eyes are dazzled, but we don't feel the action in the muscles of our bodies. As we look at a Malevich our whole bodies are identified with the illusory movement of geometric forms in space. And this not only when the forms compose a highly complex configuration in several planes and directions, but even in so simple and so flimsy a structure as the *Small thin cross on white* of 1916–17, which consists of nothing but a little cross with a red vertical and a black horizontal axis floating slightly to the left of centre of a sea of white.



Vertical Suprematist Construction (1917

No other painter has been able to give geometric forms such plastic animation as Malevich. Or, rather, one other has given them the animation and some of the plasticity, but at the cost of their identity as geometric forms. I am thinking of Kandinsky, in those paintings of the 1920s which are so close in formal organisation to certain Malevich paintings of about 1915, like the *Blue Rectangle over Purple Bar* and the *Black Trapezium and Red Square*. Kandinsky's weakness is that in giving life to geometric forms he is unable to stop them from reminding us of objects: the pictures tend to look like diagrams of golf courses or fair-grounds, just as the pictures in which he uses free forms tend to look like bacteria under a microscope. The forms don't have enough autonomous life, always seem to mean something other than themselves, and the whole point of using geometric forms is that they are supposed to be the forms most capable of having an autonomous life. Which makes it sound as if this objection to Kandinsky is academic and purist: my point,

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however, is that, when this kind of form doesn't have an autonomous life, the life it does have looks feeble. With Malevich, the animation of the forms does not involve the animistic. The forms that dance against their background are the geometric elements themselves: the life they have been given is a life of their own.

These paintings were followed about 1917 by the *White on White* series. Here again, as in 1915, Malevich immediately visualised a surprisingly wide range of pictorial possibilities in an idea which might have been arrived at by taking thought. This time the reasoning might have gone: I am in search of the absolute in painting; white is the symbol of the absolute; therefore I shall paint in white on white. Or it might have gone: I am in search of the maximum purity of means; white is the purest colour; *etc.* Whether any such ratiocination occurred, Malevich didn't paint as if it did: he painted as if white on white was a vision, given. The two whites, one tending to grey, the other to cream (that at least is how they look now: when freshly painted they may have looked different, but the distinct colour-contrast must always have been there), are harmonised with a Whistlerian subtlety. And this subtlety is matched by that of the handling. There is a sensuousness and a refinement about the paint which makes it clear—if the point needs making—that Malevich was a painter, and an easel painter at that. The idea of painting in white on white might seem to be that of an iconoclast; in reality the paintings are the work of an æsthete. It is true that Malevich's next works were projects for "an idealised architecture," but this by no means makes him any the less of an æsthete. In 1921, he wrote:

> Everything, the whole of our world must be clothed in suprematist form: textiles, wall-paper, pots, plates, furniture, sign-paintings, in short everything must be made according to the new form of harmony.

Yet when it came to the point and he had the chance to design pottery, he produced designs which as Miss Gray has put it, "are rather 'a suprematist idea of a cup' than a practical form. For he felt that an artist's job is to make idealised projects, to spiritually organise life, rather than create utilitarian objects. . . . Malevich held that art cannot take a practical part in organising life, that in becoming 'useful' art ceases to be; Tatlin proclaimed 'easel-painting,' 'pure art,' to be an anachronism in a socialist society, and the new artist to be the 'artist-engineer.' " It was not that Malevich was less anxious than Tatlin to identify himself with and serve the new society: their conflict was a matter of opposing conceptions of service, the contemplative and the active.

IRONICALLY enough, Malevich could have been of service to Soviet society even after the doctrine of Socialist Realism was announced in 1932. Between then and his death three years later, at the age of fifty-seven, he produced a series of portraits—of his wife, his daughter, friends, and himself—in which he bravely tried to compromise between the demand for straightforward representation and his obsession with abstract design. And the compromise was æsthetically successful (so far as one can judge from photographs). It produced a type of simple, classical, monumental portrait that closely and touchingly recalls Italian Quattrocento portraits (a tendency to give the sitters archaic clothes, or clothes that could be taken as archaic, suggests that the resemblance may have been intentional). Now, portraiture of this kind could and should have been extremely useful to the Soviet authorities: it was idealising and grand and at the same time presented a perfectly intelligible likeness. What could have been more suitable as a style for portraying the heroes of a collectivist state? In fact, that style was considered too esoteric by the Soviet authorities. They might have got a Socialist Realism had they given Malevich some of the opportunities of a Diego Rivera. The trouble was that in practice they could think of "Socialist Realism" only in terms of bourgeois popular art.

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THEATRE

Ibsen Unchained

By Nigel Dennis

"THE *plays written by Ibsen to illustrate his thesis that the real slavery of to-day is slavery to ideals. . . .*"

SHAW, THE QUINTESSENCE OF IBSENISM

"A whole species of the most malicious 'idealism'—which appears . . . in Henrik Ibsen for instance, that typical old maid—has as its object to poison the clear conscience, the natural element in sexual love."

NIETZSCHE, ECCE HOMO

"Love, as a practical factor in society, is still a mere appetite. That higher development of it which Ibsen shows us occurring in the case of Rebecca West in Rosmersholm. . . ."

SHAW, THE QUINTESSENCE OF IBSENISM

" 'The emancipation of women' . . . is the instinctive hatred of degenerate women for those who are healthy. . . . In their efforts to rise to the 'Higher Woman' . . . all they really wish to do is to lower the general level of women . . . [they are] the misbegotten whose most deep-rooted instinct is revenge."

NIETZSCHE, ECCE HOMO

"Now that the great awakening of women which we call the Militant Suffrage Movement is upon us. . . ."

SHAW, THE QUINTESSENCE OF IBSENISM

"Woman is indescribably more wicked than man, and cleverer also. . . . The more womanly a woman is, the more she fights tooth and nail against rights in general: the natural order . . . assigns to her by far the foremost rank."

NIETZSCHE, ECCE HOMO

There's lots more, but these snippets are enough to show that Nora never had it so good as in these last seventy years. No sooner has she nested down in her doll's house than a passionate idealist, pouring curses on all idealism through a red beard, has routed her out with roars of "Awake to Suffrage!"—but she has not reached the front door before another sort of idealist, pouring curses on all idealism through a preposterously huge moustache, has thrashed her back again with screams of "Wicked, degenerate, misbegotten!" Oh, how stimulating it must be for a strong woman, always having to ask herself: "Am I Lady Macbeth or am I Dr. Summerskill?" What excitement! What drama! What fun! What a change from the routine of the doll's house—and, equally, what a change from hanging daily on the end of that strap from Burnt Oak to Monument! Oh, yes, its redeeming high love one man, and redeeming low love the other man, with Freud hurrying in late to pour incest on the flames—and may the day never come, Nora prays, when the male seekers after truth stop quarrelling about which sort she likes best and what she was really made for. May they go on eternally, dressed in their absurd trousers and wearing their ideal expressions, explaining *what a woman really is* and believing honestly that they know: surely this proud innocence is part of their charm—*why* Hedda finds them so good to eat, *why* Thea and Rebecca will stand to their pumps day and night? As for Ibsen, who stirred it all up, could any man be more irresistible to women? What cosy bungalow, what tremulous casting of the vote can compare with the supreme pleasure of sitting in the stalls knowing that for a couple of hours *it's going to be all about women*—their boldness and badness, their goodness and sweetness, their glorious elevations and their hideous downfalls? And those wonderful *men* on the stage! Such an assortment to choose from—idealistic parsons sitting on the ends of sofas with their heads in their hands; sensual, black-coated villains making filthy proposals and threatening to tell all if the proposals are rejected; pale, excitable geniuses lurching across the stage hot from the arms of red-headed dancing-girls—and withal, the ominous frump muttering of white horses to come and making sure the stove's just right for burning the geniuses' unpublished MSS—oh, the mill-race, oh, the pistols!—and thank

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God for female emancipation, because without it, only *men* would see Ibsen. And if only men saw Ibsen, *what* would the duffers see in him?

ALAS! we know. They see chiefly their own passion for taking motor-cars to pieces and itemising the débris. For Ibsen has been God's gift to pedantry. His crowning glory has not been his work but the *way* he worked. To produce Ibsen, to act in Ibsen, must be at best a game as intriguing as a detective story and, at worst, an experience almost as destructive of commonsense as is an effort to understand the substances of the Trinity or the preposterous properties of the communion wafer. "Ibsen," Shaw wrote, "has proved . . . his right to canonical rank as one of the major prophets of the modern Bible"—which has only meant that he has proved to be mere Scripture in the hands of theologians. What is the significance of the bouquets of flowers in *Hedda Gabler*? If Nora dances a tarantella, can she be said to have been bitten by a sort of tarantula? Why does Hedda move her piano from the front of the stage to the back: what *is* a piano? Ibsen, we know, met a young lady at Gossensass in 1889 whom he made into Hilda in *The Master Builder*; but this is only drab *fact*: the thrill comes when we wonder if Dr. Julius Elias was right to suggest that Thea, too, was a *"Gossensasser Hildetypus."* Oh, may we never sit down to a mess of Ibsen without murmuring, as a grace, this glorious denomination: *"Gossensasser Hildetypus"!*

From time to time, of course, we hear a faint squeak from the hunted old maid himself. "I am not a member of the Women's Rights League," he tells (what courage!) a gathering of the Women's Rights League in 1898: "Whatever I have written has been without any conscious thought of making propaganda." Any symbols that appeared in his work, he said too, were not *his* fault; they just happened to drop there—and he might have added that one cannot write even Jack and the Beanstalk without an occasional symbol butting in. "In Ibsen's mind . . . the way to Communism lies through . . . uncompromising Individualism," said Shaw; but Ibsen himself, asked why he was going back to Norway in his old age, only answered in his stuffy way: "I want to be a good head of a household and have my affairs in order . . . . I must consolidate my property, lay it down in good securities, and get it under control." In brief—no balls at all, for the revolutionary, the symbolist, the emancipatee—no balls for anyone unless they do as so many have done—invent them and then hang them on Ibsen as if he were a sort of trousered chandelier.

But can we, to change the metaphor, careen Ibsen after seventy years of barnacles? If we scrape off *all* his divinity students, how much will we find left of the Blessed Henrik? Will we find nothing, for instance, but Nietzsche's "typical old maid"—a dreadful charge against Ibsen, but one which is well worth bringing precisely because it grieves us so much.

LET US take the method of work first. Authors, as has been pointed out long ago, tend to be of two sorts: either they get it all down in a few planned outbursts, like Mozart and Stendhal and Shaw, or they start with little phrases and notions, like Beethoven and Ibsen, and build-up and build-up for all the world like Ramsay MacDonald. Authors of the second sort are old maids indeed: as heads of their artistic households their affairs *must* be in order, their securities properly invested: however wild or rhapsodic their creations, a piecemeal doggedness is their way to it. Hence the famous Ibsen drafts and notebooks—the ponderings over names, colours, beards, and phrasings, the interminable harkings-back and re-touchings, the laying on of hands in studied little dabs. Hence the distinct arrangement of the Ibsen set—so nicely suited to the old maid who enters to whisk the chair-legs and stays to flush the hares.

But may one suggest that this method of work is more an author's way of supplying *himself* with solid footholds than it is of explaining his characters? To a large extent, of course, the two things work together, and it would be absurd for a producer *not* to study the thousand-and-one clues which the master-builder has made a part of his signature. But if our eyes are forever marvelling at the means, how much can they see clearly of the whole? And similarly, if we are forever fitting Ibsen into our own contexts, are we not bound to limit his range proportionately and deny him any sort of timelessness? Can we not take for granted, for example, that Hedda will still be at pistol-practice when everyone has forgotten the Oedipus complex? Or, when Shaw gives us a chapter on "The Technical Novelty in Ibsen's Plays" and defines this novelty as "making discussion . . . the real centre of [a] play's interest," may we not sympathise with the young enthusiast of 1891 but wish that he might have seen the discussion-play as something harking back to Aeschylus rather than immediately revolutionary?

Certainly, when the curtain rises on Minos Volanakis' production of *Hedda Gabler*, the mere sight of Michael Richardson's clean handsome set inspires us to look and listen as if Ibsen had never been produced before.* The

* This memorable production closed after two weeks at the Oxford Playhouse.

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"gloomy sort of ghoul, bent on groping for horrors by night" (as *"The Gentlewoman"* described Ibsen after seeing *Ghosts*) appears suddenly in a hard Greek light which shows brilliantly the artifices, the roots, and the relationships of Ibsen's art. How stultifying and uninteresting in this hard light is the matter of late-Victorian rebellion compared with Hedda's splendid lineage, running back, as here we see it does, first to *Macbeth* and *Arden of Feversham* and then right on to the cannibal ladies of *Medea* and *The Bacchae*! How dreary even to ponder the social strictures of 19th-century Christiania when there, before our eyes, is Miss Joan Greenwood carrying malice and vindictiveness as dashingly as she carries her clothes and fully capable, in a Greek moment, of popping *real* children into the domestic stove instead of paper ones! Surely it is a pity even to analyse her motives too much, let alone pin them down dead-in-time, when two-and-a-half thousand years of monstrous females are on the boil in her again? How strongly rooted in the feminine world of any age is a Hedda who, brave or coward, demands vine-leaves in a man's hair! And how much more spacious and splendid Ibsen himself, when he is allowed to stand in the company of his Greek and Elizabethan peers, instead of alone in his corner of time!

The brightness of Mr. Volanakis' production also shows the Ibsen machinery at its starkest—which is far better than seeing it in its usual tureen of Brown Windsor. It is not of first importance, this machinery, but its cogs and leads are so lacking in style that one wishes the old maid had been either more, or less fussy. Except in the plays of China and Japan, we like to see visitors drop in and out naturally, instead of being summoned to the stage and dismissed on weak pretexts by the author; we dislike being shown two pistols so as to be sure that both will be fired; and we can grasp the burning significance of a stove without a domestic opening the fire-box door and showing us the electric light inside it. Geniuses, we think, do *not* carry their priceless MSS about in their pockets; and when they have lost these in whore-houses, as so few do, the rough drafts do not appear spontaneously from lady-helpers' petticoats. We think, too, that when a woman hears her beloved genius has been shot, she should be allowed at least a few days to keen properly in, and not selfishly sat down immediately to the assembling of his literary remains, solely in order that the author may finish his play. The pedant's Ibsen, in short—the methodical, meticulous, master-building Ibsen—is, in truth, the weakest of Ibsen as well as the strongest, and if we admire the virtues of his method, let us confess as readily to its shockers. Coincidence and contrivance—the shotgun weddings of the theatre—do little harm to comedy and are a prime necessity of farce. But this is precisely why they make tragedy look silly.

IF Hedda Gabler helps us to see the line that runs from Ibsen back to Euripides, *Rosmersholm** surely connects us with Sophocles and Aeschylus. To see the Manor of the Rosmers in the context of Victorian turmoil is to ignore its greater tie, first, with the House of Atreus and the House of Laius and, second, with the melodramatic House of Usher. And if, unlike *Hedda Gabler*, *Rosmersholm* has lost much of its power to excite our feelings, is this not because it seems a drab, rather *wet* little House compared with its Greek models? Rebecca West herself may be better suited than Hedda Gabler to please an audience that estimates art in terms of so-called compassion—the modern equivalent of the happy ending—but is not our whole interest drawn to the badness of her past and not in the least to the "higher love" which she at last attains? Is her former unscrupulousness not much more fascinating than her development of a conscience; does she not sink, theatrically, in proportion as she rises, ideally?

It can be said that this, precisely, was Ibsen's intention—to show natural vigour cowed by conscience and idealism—but can it be said that the dramatic consequence does justice to the intellectual intention? The mill-race, the white shawl of the Fates, the spirit of the deceased wife, the haunted House and its white horses—they are either too grand or too lush to match with the provincial dullness of the apostate clergyman, the Tory schoolmaster, and the radical editor. For it is not only Ibsen's admirers who lessen his grandeur by pinning him to a chosen moment of time: Ibsen himself was often tempted into the same smallness. A hero who sets out to purge a sewage system, as Dr. Stockman does in *An Enemy of the People*, can never loom as large as Hercules in the Augean Stables; excellent as was Shaw's work for the St. Pancras Borough Council, it was never the stuff of drama. And so with the "real" people and "real" problems of *Rosmersholm*: far from exciting our unchanging passions, they only invoke the topical and temporal in us. How would Canon Collins face up to Sir Alfred Bossom and Mr. Hugh Cudlipp? All three are doubtless admirable characters and extremely "real," yet no dramatist could stage a momentous answer to this momentary question—even if Dame Rebecca West consented to fire the Canon.

* It has been transferred from the Royal Court Theatre, and was until recently currently at the Comedy.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Face-lifting

AT THE London Mermaid Theatre they are doing *Henry V—in Battledress*. That is to say, the English are dressed, more or less, in 1939–45 uniforms, the storming of Harfleur is embellished by film sequences taken from old news-reels of that war and projected upon the backdrop, while infantry tactics and *Roses of Picardy* played upon a mouth-organ re-echo the trenches of the First World War. The French soldiers wear, obscurely enough, uniforms and helmets of deliberately German cut and colour. In fact, it would seem that Bernard Miles and Julius Gellner would synthesise at least three wars into this one production. A fourth, the normal phoney stage war with a single, popping, improbable cannon is also in evidence. They further attempt to synthesise three distinct styles, Irvingesque realism (that cannon), documentary (that film sequence), and symbolism (that mouth-organ). The purpose of the time confusion or, more politely, the universalisation of the theme, is presumably to state that all wars are alike, and indeed as much is said in the programme notes. "Think when we talk of Harry that you see the kid across the road who parachuted into Hell at Arnhem, or the childhood friend who died in the stinking mud of the Somme." The confusion of styles is presumably an attempt to be *avant-garde* in the artistic desert of the London theatre, where Brecht is believed to be the *dernier cri* and flatulent platitudes of the "War is Hell" variety are offered as profundities a hundred years after Sherman.

Why, when an actor impersonates Henry V, should I think of the kid across the road, or for that matter of the girl at the snack counter or my aunt in Wiltshire—unless the actor is so incompetent that my mind wanders? (And this is not the case with William Peacock's performance at the Mermaid.) Furthermore, of Shakespeare's many virtues one that is frequently overlooked is that he was, for his age, a conscientious and really very accurate dramatic historian, who studied his Holinshed and the other authorities available to him with care. He portrayed King Henry's army, and the emotions which inspired king, nobles, and commoners, most exactly: such was the mediæval host at war, and from Harry to Williams they were playing the parts that feudal society assigned them. Even the exceptions are of their time, and to identify Pistol with a cigarette-flogging corporal of 1945 is as intelligent as it is to identify Cleopatra with some contemporary film star: they may *look* alike, particularly if the one is dressed up to resemble the other, but they aren't.*

So what is the point of making archers masquerade as infantrymen born half-a-millennium later? Why confuse an audience with echoes and overtones (in this case almost deafening sound-tracks which often drowned the actors' voices completely) which are quite inapposite? Amusement, perhaps? Verisimilitude can certainly be ruled out, nor is it clear that it is even intended, in the news-reel gimmick: art, that is to say pattern-making, and reality, that is to say inchoate material, cannot merge and indeed simply cancel one another out, leaving nothing. So amusement, entertainment, must be the aim.

But is such chaos, in fact, amusing? Professor Picard once began a book (aptly entitled *Hitler in Ourselves*) with a description of the hideous confusion engendered by listening to a morning's broadcast over any typical radio station. Jazz follows P.T. and is succeeded by a talk on bee-keeping, a little Mozart, the stock-exchange prices, ten minutes of film criticism, a Spanish lesson, and the news. By the time he has reached this point, the listener is presumably stupefied to a degree at which he can believe that both anything and nothing is of interest and value. So on we merrily go with a description of a sputnik-launching, a religious service, some Viennese waltzes, and cookery notes, all presented with equal seriousness, interchangeable items. Nothing matters, or everything. But we cannot cope with everything, so we choose nothing, nothing at all.

This sort of nihilism, transposed into time, is the essence of the *Mermaid* production. 1916, 1415, 1944, it's all one and the same. Mix them up, confuse the audience, subtract all moral imperatives from three wars, and attempt to portray a Platonic war in concrete terms: the final result is a simple denial of meaning. This is not original, is not *avant-garde*, belonging as it does in two traditions, one new and the other old. The new one, which is of this century, which is *Hitler in Uns Selbst*, is the reduction of doubt into cruel denial. If we doubt the human dignity of others, we end by denying it, in the Congo, in Nazi-dominated Europe, in South Africa. If

* An advertisement, presumably inserted by the Army Council in the programme, says: "Though guided missiles have replaced the yeoman's bow, serving soldiers in the modern army still maintain the old Agincourt traditions." If true, this conjures up a very weird picture of what goes on nowadays at Larkhill and Catterick.

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we deny their dignity, then we must ultimately deny their human individuality: "they" become interchangeable and therefore do not really exist. Since they do not really exist, maybe we don't either, a terrifying thought: so into the concentration camps with them! Out of sight! Such a denial, treated humorously, becomes the joke of the surrealists, of Nigel Dennis' *Cards of Identity*, of some of Ionesco's plays, and much else as well. Between the brief broadcast on stamp-collecting and the equally brief talk about Kant, we learn that scientists have said something which sounds as though the temporal dimension were in doubt. Is everything happening everywhere simultaneously? If so, then the Moscow para-historians are perfectly at liberty to re-write the past daily, while superficial commentators on that past can identify Spartacus with Marxism or Bonaparte with Nasser until we have no idea what is going on in the world at all. We doubt such indubitable facts as space, and the ploughing up of Kazakhstan is one with the opening up of the Canadian wheatfields, not better, not worse, not even different, identical. Rubbish, and all rubbish is boring.

As for the older one, an equally tedious tradition though not a dangerous one, why cannot these people leave Shakespeare alone? The answer is, presumably, that he's better box-office mucked about. He'd be better box-office still if all the actresses—and for all I know all the actors too—appeared in the nude. Re-written in the 17th and 18th centuries, cut to bits in the 19th, "interpreted" by Marxists and Freudians in the 20th, by what right do these intellectual and artistic pigmies piddle in his ocean? It does Shakespeare no harm, of course, but cannot they realise that enough is enough? It is not even entertaining any more, because it has been done so often, so *ad nauseam* often. Let them be urged to leave Shakespeare alone for a bit. After all, if they are determined to mash up a playwright's intensely careful work, why not have a go at old Bert Brecht, whom they all seem to admire so, thirty years on? *Mutter Courage* needs to have her face lifted far more than does Katharine of France.

Constantine FitzGibbon

"The Future of the Left"

New Roots of Working-class Conservatism

If Mr. C. A. R. Crosland's thesis is sound (*i.e.*, that growing material prosperity during the 1950s led working-class voters to desert the Labour Party in large numbers) then Transport House might as well put up its shutters—because during the 1960s consumption will again increase substantially for practically all electors. The findings of recent surveys, however, suggest that the explanation for the Labour Party's failures at recent General Elections is not quite so simple; the relationship between working-class prosperity and working-class party loyalties is a complex one.

Of course, there has been in recent years a spectacular increase in the proportion of British adults living in homes equipped with durable consumer goods. And in this general increase the lead in this expansion has been taken by the more prosperous section of the working class. Approximately two-thirds of all electors can in terms of their occupations, be described as working class; and half of these (*i.e.*, one-third of the total electorate) are in families where the chief wage-earner is a skilled manual worker. His earnings are well above the average of all operatives; he enjoys security in employment and retirement that is unknown to the semi-skilled and unskilled worker; and approximately 40 per cent of their grown-up children had some schooling beyond the age of 15 (for parents as a whole the ratio is much nearer 20 per cent).

Between early 1956 and the autumn of 1959, this prosperous half of the working class acquired durable consumer goods at a speed that far exceeded that of the population as a whole. Between those two dates the proportion who owned refrigerators almost trebled (from 6 per cent to 16 per cent)—their car ownership almost doubled (from 18 per cent to 32 per cent)—their ownership of washing-machines grew at roughly the same pace (from 25 per cent to 44 per cent)—admittedly the number of their television sets increased by only half, but this was sufficient to bring them almost to saturation point (by the end of 1959, 85 per cent of these households had a set)—and over these three years, in this sector of the working class, house-ownership rose by 15 per cent, so that by the time the 1959 Election came round well over one-third of them lived in houses which they either owned or were in the course of buying.

There can be no questioning of Mr. Cros-

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land's initial facts. Jack has never had it so good. But this is only half the story. The essential question is: How did these people vote? Did they vote solidly for the Conservatives? Between 1955 and 1959 did they *en masse* change their votes from Labour to Conservative? The truth is that in both General Elections some voted Labour and some voted Conservative. And this bifurcation of the prosperous working class is the essence of the Labour Party's problem.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS? During the three months preceding the October 1959 General Election, a nation-wide survey of the electorate indicated that prosperous working-class electors intended to vote almost 2 to 1 for the Labour Party (48 per cent Labour, 29 per cent Conservative, 23 per cent Liberal, and "don't know"). The two groups within the prosperous working class (Labour and non-Labour voters) were very similar in average income, size of family, ownership of durable consumers, etc. They also gave very similar answers to questions designed to learn something about their priorities in the realm of social policy. For example, each member of the sample was shown a list of six "problems" and told:

> Here are some important problems facing the people in this country. Would you please read through this list and tell me which one you feel is most important to you, personally?

Both groups largely and equally rejected such suggestions as "national defence," "government control and regulation of business," etc., and voted solidly for "improving conditions for your family"—56 per cent of Labour voters chose this, and 49 per cent of the non-Labour voters did the same. In other words, within the prosperous working class, people roughly identical in prosperity and in *weltanschauung* were to be found holding diametrically opposed political views. How did this come about? Why did the affluence of one group lead to support for the Labour Party while affluence for the remainder led them to oppose Labour?

The paradox can be explained if one recalls two fairly commonplace generalisations about the origins of opinions. First, that a man holds an opinion because holding it serves certain functions in his life; and, secondly, that one of these functions is to help him establish his identity—partly to the outside world but primarily in his own eyes. Sometimes this identity is reached by indicating affinity with a social type, sometimes by indicating dissociation. With this functional theory of opinion in mind, our prosperous working-class respondents were asked to describe the kind of people who vote for the Labour Party and the kind who vote for the Conservative Party.

By association, Labour supporters saw themselves above all as people interested in the welfare of humanity. Negatively they built their identity by describing Conservative voters, first and foremost, as "selfish people."

Non-Labour voters in the prosperous working class created their identity positively by describing Conservative voters as "people interested in national strength and independence" and as "intelligent people." Negatively they rounded off the picture of themselves by pointing out that Labour supporters are "selfish" and "ignorant."

In other words, some prosperous working-class adults vote Labour because of their concern to see themselves as people moved by social generosity. Their neighbours, equally prosperous, vote Conservative since this establishes them (in their own eyes) as patriotic and intelligent; at the same time, apparently aware of their "deviationism" in not voting Labour, and conscious of the traditional working-class image of the Conservatives as the party of privilege and self-interest, they avoid seeing themselves as selfish by recognising this trait as a distinctive characteristic of to-day's Labour voters. In short, prosperous working-class adults vote Conservative because by "buying" this label they are able to recognise themselves as intelligent (*i.e.*, clever, educated, sensible) and altruistic (*i.e.*, patriots and non-Labour). And equally prosperous working-class adults vote Labour because in this mirror they can see themselves as humanitarians beyond the reach of (Conservative) selfishness.

IF THIS ANALYSIS OF OPINIONS is accepted then the Labour Party is faced with the fact that to-day one-third of prosperous working-class people prefer to think of themselves as intelligent rather than as generous, and their conviction is that this preference can be realised by the simple step of voting Conservative. This aspiration and the consequent equation is the heart of the problem facing Transport House. If the Labour Party is to win elections in the 1960's it must persuade these people that there is no necessary conflict between intelligence and social generosity and that in voting Labour they will not automatically rob their self-image of one of these traits at the expense of the other.

And apparently there is not much time left for this reconciliation; the survey already mentioned showed that of all prosperous working-class adults who voted Labour in 1955, only 80 per cent intended to vote Labour again in 1959. But nearly 90 per cent of the members of this social class who had already voted Conservative in 1955 were satisfied to renew their Conservative vote last October.

There seems to me one other deficiency in any

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analysis of the 1959 Election which attributes the Labour Party's defeat exclusively to mass defections by working-class voters intoxicated by prosperity. Thirty per cent of the electorate is made up of middle-class white-collar workers. We have heard so often that no Conservative Party can win without working-class support that we tend to forget that no Labour Party can to-day win an election unless at least one-quarter of this middle class votes Labour. In 1945 and 1950 this did, in fact, happen. But by 1955 the ratio was down to 20 per cent; and judging by our survey of voting intentions, it fell again in 1959. Between 1955 and 1959 the rate of middle-class defections from the Labour Party was slightly greater than that of working-class defections. Of those who remained loyal, over 60 per cent declared that people who vote Labour are those who are interested in the welfare of humanity and only 23 per cent identified them as intelligent people. Since respondents were free to identify as many types as they wished (*i.e.*, all of them could have designated both humanitarianism and intelligence as typical of Labour voters), it is clear from these figures that the middle-class socialist's self-image is hardly a happy or a durable self-image for people with a much more than average regard for education and the intellect. Their need for a mirror which shows them intelligent as well as generous is even more urgent than it is for the wavering working-class voter. And indeed only if Transport House can solve the middle-class conflict will there be a future for the Labour Party since in a few years' time at least half the population will be middle class in occupation, and a good deal more than that will be middle class in aspiration.

One final point. The survey gave at least one clue to a contemporary political definition of intelligence: in the total sample, 6 per cent of all respondents said that "Government control and regulation" is the most important problem facing the people of this country—and among Labour supporters who described intelligence as one of the distinctive traits of Labour voters the proportion choosing "Government control" was even less than 6 per cent.

THUS, ONE SOCIAL SURVEY of the kind urged by Mr. Crosland has been carried out. Some of its findings should help to clarify the problems facing the Labour Party. The growing material prosperity of the past ten years has undoubtedly led some people, who otherwise would have voted Labour, either to abstain or to vote for a non-Labour candidate. But clearly, material prosperity *per se* does not produce a shift in political loyalties, since as we have seen, a considerable majority of the prosperous working class have continued to vote Labour while enjoying their new affluence. The deciding factor in the defection would seem to be a widespread and growing concern among ordinary people for a political outlook which combines humanitarianism with intelligence, and which approaches the question of governmental regulation and industry in a purely pragmatic frame of mind. In post-war England intelligence and higher education have achieved a social prestige which overrides almost all other day-to-day values; and the actions of Conservative and Labour governments have demonstrated that the "regulation of industry" as a political principle is almost as non-controversial as the "welfare state."

Mark Abrams

SOCIALIST theory, in its analysis of contemporary society, has usually been relatively hard-headed and complex, even when wrong, but in its vision of the future simplistic and naïve. "The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things." This was Engels' "magical" formula for the meaning of socialism. "To organise the whole national economy like the postal system . . . this is our immediate aim," wrote Lenin in *State and Revolution*. And, continuing, he portrayed the problem of running the State as simply one of "registering, filing, and checking . . . so simplified and reduced . . . [as] to be quite within the reach of every literate person." And so the fates of millions were committed to utopian fantasies.

It is to Mr. Crosland's enormous credit that in his studies of the "future" of Socialism and of the Left that he tries to be more hard-headed and realistic. But Mr. Crosland is not only a student, but a politician, and sometimes the political constraints bind too tightly, which is the case, I think, in his ENCOUNTER article. He does not go far enough with the implications of his case. Let me try and push the argument.

Socialism has been singularly a *distributivist* doctrine. It presumed (the texts are overwhelming and need not be cited) that capitalism had solved all problems of production (at least the "forces" of production) and the remaining issues were ones of social justice. Its emphasis was, therefore, on "equality." Mr. Crosland continues that tradition, and rightly so, in his pleas for greater social and educational equality in British life. But there remains, to confound Marx and the early Keynes, the problem of *growth*. The economic questions are no longer those of the thirties—how to maintain *effective demand*. We know now how to do it. The key questions are how to maintain and speed economic growth—

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within the framework of personal freedom and without incurring inflation.

That problem, unfortunately, runs the risk of being obscured by new sloganising. Mr. Michael Foot, in addressing himself to that issue, in a recent number of *Spectator*, says simply that the Russians have shown the way—by *planning*. But that is not really true. The Russians, until recently, have not planned, but *mobilised*, which is a very different thing. Their techniques were quite primitive and often quite wasteful. What they did was no different from the mobilisation techniques of the British Ministry of Supply during World War II, or the U.S. War Production Board from 1943 to 1945. By concentrating on a few key objectives, and by pouring large investment sums into a few areas, the Soviet Union was able to mobilise its natural resources and manpower to build a large industrial base. But the so-called "Method of Balances" which the Soviets presumably used for allocation purposes was simply a statement of over-all outputs and inputs with no specific details about the simultaneous balancing of thousands of different products.* And enormous waste did result from such procedures. Only now, when consumers are able to demand *wide varieties* of goods, and when shifts of resources may have to be made to accommodate *different* demands, will the Russians confront the kind of economic problems that Western countries have faced in the last decades.

The questions of planning and growth are, thus, still before us; and the answers are still open ones. It may be that the technical sophistication of post-Keynesian economics—the "input-output" models of Leontieff and similar theoretical advances—does provide us with more viable tools. But these can only be employed, as tools, within a framework of policy, and this, so far as Labour is concerned, is largely undefined. Or rather the definitions apply to other problems: Mr. Crosland, in his essay, was seeking to differentiate "left" from "right" along the axis of "equality"; and this may be a valid differentiation. But the problems of the "future" of the "Left," as well as the "future" of Britain (or America, or Russia) have to be specified in other terms: the nature of economic incentives, of social motivations ("meaning" in work), of restrictionist practices (in part, the habits of trade unions), and a range of similar concerns.

The key social group in all these matters is the rising class of technicians, engineers, administrative, and managerial employees, who while not a numerical (or electoral) majority are the "ginger" group of the technical society. Just as the industrial worker (although not the majority of the early capitalist society) created the social problems of the past hundred years, so the new technical classes will set the problems of the new decades. Their recruitment, their education, their culture, their élan, their desires, become crucial for the health and growth of the society. And inevitably the social politics of a country (although not always the electoral issues) will revolve about them. I think that Mr. Crosland, in his ENCOUNTER essay, neglects these structural changes in the character of modern society, and their consequences.

THERE IS, I THINK, one other, political-ideological change which Mr. Crosland inadequately confronts: the fact that the socialist movements of Western Europe (or more narrowly, Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, the Low countries and Britain, the countries of "revisionism") have become since World War II a part of the fabric of their societies in a way which was never true before 1939. Orthodox socialist theory never could really conceive the possibility of tinkering with and transforming the social structure of their countries, particularly through economic techniques, or more specifically through fiscal policy. Marxian dogmatics was posed in "all-or-none" terms: capitalism or socialism. The consequence was that when Labour governments took power in England (Ramsay MacDonald) and Germany (Muller and Hilferding) because of the social and political collapses in these countries, the Socialist governments had no concrete *economic* policies to meet the crises. Both Hilferding and MacDonald resorted to the most orthodox and conservative economic policies (budget-cutting, gold-hoarding, etc.), with disastrous deflationary consequences. To this extent, Keynes was not only the reformer of capitalism but the transformer of socialism. The consequences of this are most apparent in Scandinavia where the Social Democratic governments have gone furthest in the utilisation of fiscal techniques for social purposes. But this has produced not only a change in the politico-ideological atmosphere, but in the social structure as well. The traditions, once so strong (and in Britain as well), that the working-class boy does not seek to rise out of and "desert his class" are fading. The changes in the educational structure, produced by the need for new technical education and by the breakdown of old class-feeling, begin to transform the society as well. Recently the Copenhagen labour press changed its name from *Social Demokraten* to *Aktuelt* (The News), in order to hold its circulation. With the growth in productivity rather than collective bargaining setting the limits of further material improve-

* For an illuminating discussion, see the article by Wassily Leontieff on "Soviet Economic Science" in *Foreign Affairs*, January 1960.

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ment, the trade union has begun to lose most of its old functions. These are now "immanent" tendencies in Western society, and Britain is not wholly exempt from these.

Mr. Crosland, as a *student* of these problems (in his *Future of Socialism*) is aware of these complexities; Mr. Crosland, as a *politician* confronting these issues (in his ENCOUNTER essay), somewhat simplifies them. Both rôles are necessary; but the functions should be kept distinct.

Daniel Bell

The Profits of T.V.

IT IS curious and exasperating that so much thoughtful writing about television ignores one controlling fact. It has become and will remain a predominantly low-brow distraction, closely bound up with the standards of living and tastes of this enormous majority.

The average viewer is not someone who lives too far from London to get to the *Old Vic*. It is someone who wouldn't go to the *Old Vic* if you paid him. It is someone who left school at fifteen, is married with two children, earns about £13 a week, lives in an industrial suburb or a housing estate, is not absorbed by his work but has no thought of changing it, has not read a serious book since he left school, and has not had more than a half-dozen thoughts that were not conditioned by money.

When the profit and loss of television are being discussed it must be in terms of profit and loss to this person. Reading comments on television by bishops, teaching organisations, M.P.s, those with special interests in television, studying the rating figures published by the audience research outfits, one always decides that profit and loss are greater than they really are.

The truer picture is to be found in such detailed and objective surveys as Dr. Himmelweit's study of TV and children,* which decided that television helped the more stupid child, did little harm, but was not developing its service as quickly, widely, or adventurously as it should. Every word of this conclusion can be applied to adults, with the proviso that there are more stupid adults than stupid children.

Mr. Richard Hoggart asks, in his article on "The Uses of Television" [ENCOUNTER, January], what are the attitudes being transmitted by the commercials. On the face of it they feed an instinct much older than television: the easiest way is the best way, and everything will come right if you fulfil just one condition—drink Mackeson's stout, smoke Baron's cigarettes, boil it in Daz. They encourage the buying of stuff that doesn't do the buyer a great deal of harm or good—white bread, instant drinks, processed meat—but I'm told by local shops that most housewives go on asking for the detergent that is marked FOURPENCE OFF THIS WEEK. I don't believe that commercials can do more than other propaganda. They can shove a trend, not change or create it. The prevailing attitude put over by the commercials—"Why-do-it-the-hard-way?"—exploits a very deeply-rooted instinct. Everyone but the saintly few would secretly rather be a lucky grasshopper than a deserving ant.

As Mr. Hoggart observes, the huge television audience is "undifferentiated." It is just this factor that has helped television to begin (it has not passed the beginning) a revolution in mass communication. Compare it with the popular newspapers, each of whom built its circulation by establishing with its readers an understanding that in general it would not puzzle, offend, or contradict, its readers' prejudices. Television has no such understanding, and indeed the size of its audience makes it impossible. It cannot avoid treading on somebody's pet prejudice.

The profit here is that the public now accepts television's privilege (and it is spreading into the better newspapers) of saying something that the public does not agree with or hadn't thought of. It is true that the privilege is understood not to apply to certain emotionally controversial subjects, such as Sex, the Monarchy, Bull-fighting, and Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, the gain is significant. There is a big, growing field of subjects on which it is no longer safe for a professional humbug to assume that he will win.

The defect of television is that it has not carried the revolution further, either in its advertising or programming. It is still afraid of the size of the audience, still trying to unite it only, as Mr. Hoggart suggests, at its sillier points. He, very shrewdly, has seen that ITV's ideal is the family that does what it's told, the BBC's is the conventional, conforming middle class. Neither side has seriously challenged these attitudes.

For example, there ought to be a programme on commercial television (the suggestion is Ian Fleming's, not mine) that every so often would set out objectively the latest information about lung cancer, tooth decay, and constipation, to show the other side of the picture put forward by the tobacco, sweet- and pill-manufacturers. The BBC should use its greater freedom to be far more critical and questioning, to say nothing of doubting, than it is, particularly of its sacred white elephants: science, medicine, law, the bigger social services. When the *Daily Mail* recently invited readers to say how they thought

* See Raymond Williams, "Arguing About Television," ENCOUNTER, June, 1959.

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television should use whatever extra hours and channels it may be given, the result showed that the audience that is worth trying to please is ahead of what either service is at present giving it. There is no doubt that the lack of variety in television is a widely-felt grievance. Unfortunately, television is so expensive that it must reach as many homes as possible for the money laid out. There is thus little hope of more varied television until those who have the power have the means and the will.

The picture of an uncontrolled future in which television will gush from walls for 24-hours-a-day is a lunatic dream that we need not worry about too much. But television that uses its capacity to the full will not come without a measure of acceptance of discipline.

There are only two ways in which variety could be increased without costs ruinous to quality. The engineers could extend the range of a television signal so that the audience could tune in a dozen stations as freely as on radio. Or, and more immediately practical, television organisations could make a saner use of recorded repeats, with programmes timed to avoid head-on collisions between likes. (It is worth noting that both sides have accepted the principle of these disciplines in their programmes for schools.) By these means it would be possible to have broadcasting, in collaboration with national networks, a great number of local stations. At any given place a television set could receive six or seven programmes, which would not be similar at a given time, though over a month the output of each station would be the same. The immediate benefit would be to end the system whereby two huge networks hold circulation by catering for what their huge publics have in common. The audience watching would be in smaller groups; would be "differentiated"; would have recovered the power to choose.

I must agree with Hoggart that even so television would not be more than a "primary educator." But it could be a stimulator, an antidote to lethargy. It is a great misfortune that some of the saddest, most terrifying complacent nonsense talked about television is talked inside Parliament.

Peter Black

Hamlet and the Ghetto

THE gist of Mr. Brian Glanville's piece on *The Anglo-Jewish Writer* [ENCOUNTER, January] is, if I've correctly understood it, that "the misfortune . . . is that Jewish writers are cutting themselves off from the best of their material" (that is, from Jewish themes), and that when they do *not*, they write "about an East End Jewish world which no longer exists, presented in terms of a tradition which was built up and died in Eastern Europe." Mr. Glanville cites, as one of his two examples of this, the art of Bernard Kops, and says that in Kops' case "it is really a question of blowing on the embers of a fire which went out with the death of Israel Zangwill." In choosing the work of Bernard Kops to sustain his theorem, Mr. Glanville could not conceivably have done so more ineptly.

The best-known play of Bernard Kops is *The Hamlet of Stepney Green*. According to Mr. Glanville's notion, this must, then, be what one might call a "ghetto" play: that is, one which is about, and whose author is emotionally-intellectually involved in, a dying life (that of Stepney Jewry), and which is expressed in a dead tradition (that of Zangwill and of East European Jewish writers). *The Hamlet of Stepney Green* is exactly the contrary of all this.

The first clue is provided by its title. To think of Hamlet is to think of many things; but among them, instantly, that he was a man devoted to his people and its best traditions, but hating everything they had both been twisted into, and desperately anxious himself to break out of—and, if he could find the strength, transform—the whole situation. "Denmark's a prison"; and Elsinore is, in fact, Hamlet's ghetto, and he loathed it.

The next clues are in the names of the three chief characters. These are Sam, the father; David, his son; and Hava, David's girl: that is to say, Samuel the prophet, David the warrior who will be king, and Eve, the eternal recreative mother of the race.

From these clues alone one might expect to find (even before one had read or seen the play) that it is to be profoundly respectful of Jewish life itself; hostile to everything that recalls its imprisonment in the ghetto; that Sam will be the prophet in this predicament—praising the true essential, castigating the mis-shapen form; that David will break out of the ghetto walls triumphantly; and that Hava will help him to recreate a new life outside it in the larger world. And this is precisely what will happen.

LET US EXAMINE THE ACTIONS of each of these three characters, to see how they achieve their—and their author's—purposes. Sam, the father, it will be recalled,* dies at the end of Act I, and reappears in Acts II and III as a very voluble ghost. In Act I,

* The play was performed in London during July, 1958, and the text has been published in the Penguin "New English Dramatists" series.

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when he is still alive, but dying, we learn that he is profoundly dissatisfied with his life in Stepney Green. For instance:

> I've been poisoned by someone or something. What's the odds? By my life or my wife. But my wife was my life; so my life poisoned me, so my wife poisoned me.

He knows (as his author very well does) that Stepney Green is finished:

> Stepney Green is dead; Whitechapel is dead. What am I waiting for? Whatever became of Whitechapel? Teeming with people, so gay, so alive . . . where are they?

For his son David, whom he loves but doesn't yet fully understand, Sam is prepared to make sacrifices quite unusual for a poor Jewish merchant. David, he knows, wants to leave Wentworth street-market and become a singer; and though anxious and disturbed about this, Sam can bring himself to say:

> Look, Davey, all right I'll help you; go and study music, learn all about notes.

And even:

> Or you can take a world trip before you begin.

And Sam's ultimate message to his son, before he dies, is:

> Time presses; they decide to make the most of a bad job. Don't settle for the second best like your mother and I did.

Now for David, the son. The first thing that strikes us about him is that, though still stuck as yet in the Stepney ghetto, his *language* is so different from his father's: not just the shift of speech of generations, but the whole mood and tone of each are strongly contrasted. Compare Sam and David in their first solo dialogue in Act I. Sam says:

> Na Davey, what can I say to you? All these years I wanted you to work in the market with me, then I told myself—"Don't worry, Sam, he's looking for something better"—well—what are you going to do?

And David answers:

> Why should I work when I've got my health and strength? The thought of having to spend the rest of my life looking at the heads of herrings and the heads of hungry people makes me sick.

We soon learn why David wants to be a pop singer, that "he started going up west when he was 17," and that his most profound ambition is to reach out, as a musician, to the entire world:

> I want to make people happy—I'VE GOT TO MAKE THEM LISTEN.

Then Hava, the girl. Though still a teenager, she's already been to Israel. But:

> I couldn't seem to settle down. England's where I belong.

Brainwashing!

Why They Collaborated

EUGENE KINKEAD

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We hear from her own father (Mr. Segal) that the pretext for her return to Stepney was her mother's death, and the duty of looking after her widower father. The real reason—immediately apparent to the audience or to the reader—is that she's come back to get David. And (jumping now to Act III) she says so herself specifically:

> Then I went to Israel to get away from you but when I found you weren't there I came back again.

THE DEATH OF SAM, at the end of Act I, and his subsequent spectral return until almost the final curtain, are, of course, symbolical—a "symbol" so evident, in fact, that the term is almost over-emphatic. Sam has died, and the old Stepney ghetto with him: his task in Acts II and III will be to warn and guide his son David so that, while denying nothing essential in himself, he breaks out of Stepney Green forever. Thus, in a dialogue with his son, the ghostly father apologises for having nagged him, while alive, to become a business-man ("God forbid. I must have been mad"). He encourages his son to make the break complete—even from the *thought* of the old life:

> Some people never leave home; even when they put a thousand miles between them and the street door; when you leave, really leave.

He tells his son how to keep the will to independence burning:

> Commit arson every day in your imagination, burn down the previous day's lies, have a little revolution now and again in your heart.

Samuel the prophet's final message to the young warrior David, his message to the audience—and, one cannot but feel, the author's own message to the Jewish people—is:

> Make the most of your life—because life is a holiday from the dark—make the most of the world—because it is *your* WORLD.

Surrounding these three key characters are the Jewish comicals: the only ones remotely resembling (and oh! how little) those of Zangwill or of old East European memory. These relics the author mocks—but with an infinity of kindness and, essentially, tact. As he presents them to us, it's impossible not to like the poor old fossils still embedded there in Whitechapel: whence they, with it, will so shortly pass away. Even Sam's daughter (David's elder sister), we learn too, had already broken out before the plan began: but at the cost of marrying a man who contrived to unite in himself the disadvantages of being a Gentile, *and* a Communist, *and* a Catholic, *and* a vegetarian, *and* an inhabitant of Leeds! Desperate "integration," on the poor girl's part, indeed: which the author satirises every bit as strongly as he does the "integration" of the ghetto.

WHAT IS MOST AMAZING about this play still remains to be said: and that is, the profundity of love and respect for his people and for their ancient *permanent* traditions, by which the author is enabled to praise all these things while being totally irreverent about all the distortions—both sterile and "sympathetic"—that the ghetto period (now dead, thank God, forever) forced upon the Jewish people throughout the twilight centuries of their life in Europe. Thus, the passage at the end of Act II, Scene i, in which the mourners (so picturesquely grotesque but a moment or so before) pray in the Kaddush, with the ghost of Sam, whom they are mourning, joining in—invisible and inaudible to them—with a voice solemn from beyond the grave . . . is a most wonderful human, religious, and theatrical triumph. The next minute, or almost so, these same characters become once more the sagacious lunatics of wild, poetic farce, and the author is busy taking the mickey out of *that* archaic aspect of London Jewish life.

The Hamlet of Stepney Green is a lament for the bewailing past; a respectful dirge for it, with a tear but with no regret; and a hymn of confident affirmation that young David and his Hava will go out into the *English* world, there to live out their lives as *English Jews*. Hamlet has become Fortinbras: and the ghost of the prophet can say to the prince his son, as the old king never could at Elsinore:

> Well, Davey, it's all over. Hamlet is dead and may flights of angels sing him down the stairs.

Colin MacInnes

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Mr. Durrell and Brother Criticus

By Hilary Corke

So CLEA* is out and Mr. Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* is finished. A number of criticisms are also out and, so far as I am concerned, their authors are finished. There are good grounds for taking the *Alexandria Quartet* as a test case for reviewers. I mean nothing doctrinaire: one would not demand that a critic should or should not specifically find a particular work "good" or "bad." One may ask, though, that he should perceive its size. Of the *Quartet* it seems to me that he is free to say: "A big book—I don't like it." Others are free to disagree with him. But what he must not say, trying to slip a personal prejudice through as an absolute value-judgment, is that "This is a rotten, negligible book, of account to nobody."

I propose first to examine the *Quartet* in what I may call an actuarial way; and then to examine the pronouncements of Brother Criticus upon it. This may seem an ill-conceived succession: it may be said that, passing over the critics in silence, one should concentrate upon the work itself, presenting it in terms of pure, even marmoreal, positives. Yet the method may have virtues. It could illuminate two fields at once—Mr. Durrell's work, and the contemporary state of literary reviewing. Further, to define a work by refutations of negative comments upon it is itself a positive process. It is also that which may follow more closely the actual process of the mind. When confronted with a book one extremely admires, the tendency is to accept rather than to dissect: merits seem obvious, for they correspond with values already ideally present and to encounter them is only to find oneself surprisingly at home—it is the demerits that nag and obtrude, as discrepancies that clash. It is only when one reads an adverse criticism of what one has hitherto been grateful for without question, that one begins to formulate its virtues: "But it is not like that at all!"

THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET consists of four full-length novels (*Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive, Clea*), written around the lives—principally the love-lives—of a group of Alexandrians, and linked in unprecedented and arresting manners. Durrell himself has explained that a rough correspondence is intended with the four dimensions of space-time: three of the former and one of the latter. Perhaps a more comeatable interpretation may be derived from a hint of Pursewarden, Durrell's *persona qua* novelist and writer-about-writing, who speaks of "the novel of sliding panels." The dynamic of the work, especially in its first three parts, is essentially that of the panel that slides. The ordinary novel, set in the dimension of time, has the dynamic of a journey or of music: one starts at the start, and is carried by time from A to B, from B to C, serially down a predetermined and causal path to Z. *Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive*, are not like that at all. The events are a static, a datum already, as one opens the first page of *Justine*, given and done with. The narrator moves from item to item of a gigantic and complex immobile structure, hither and thither in both space and time, focusing his attention now here now there, lifting and handling now that now this.

If this were all, and there were no progression, only a wandering, the thing would certainly lack dynamic. That it does not: the progression, however, is not in the usual dimension of time but *in the dimension of truth*. That is where the sliding panels come in. In *Justine*, we see purely through the eyes of the narrator, Darley. He does his best to be objective about his love-affair with Justine, using wherever possible third persons' visions of her, but the nature of the case (love as always upsetting judgment)

* *Clea*. By LAWRENCE DURRELL. *Faber & Faber*. 16s.

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precludes it. It is not until we begin *Balthazar* that we get a third person's view of Darley-Justine—a panel has been slid, and much of what once seemed verified is now seen not to be so, and new truths are revealed that Darley, and we, never before suspected. Yet this new truth is by no means final. *Mountolive* invites revisions of the revisions, reinterpretations of the reinterpretations. And so the matter increases in complexity upon complexity until it begins to approach the multiplicity of life itself, which in the ordinary novel is deliberately simplified and sifted for our convenience and instruction.

In *The Alexandria Quartet*, "In the end," as Pursewarden says, "everything will be found to be true of everybody." That is a comment to be taken philosophically rather than literally: in any given situation everybody has undergone all the possible reactions even though finally he, or his nature, has chosen this rather than that one. There is no final attainable truth about everything, only a series of closer and closer near-misses. This is not to say that truth does not exist, only that it is susceptible of multiple and cumulative approximation, not of scientific definition. It is to be acted upon, not measured.

In *Clea*, of course, the dynamic alters. The temporal *point d'aperçu* now moves with the reader instead of succeeding all the events—it is the method of the ordinary novel. It is as if the first three books were merely to establish the *données* out of which *Clea* is to arise. "NOW READ ON," as the tabloids say. Indeed, to a reader excited by construction, the opening of *Clea* speaks with unexampled effect. We are off at last. And this inward movement is paralleled in the outward movement of the plot, as in all works of the true imagination; the "story" is a kind of metaphor for the interior logic. So Darley finally sets sail from the island on which he has been contemplating, Prospero-like, the regal past and comes to the city itself, the actual hard present altered city, not its memory in his mind, and the last unravelling of the knots begins.

Now, whatever else, this is clearly a remarkable innovation in structure, strictly comparable to, but in no way dependent on, the parallel achievement of Proust—I have had necessarily to grossly simplify my account of it; the Darley-Justine relation, for instance, is much over-emphasised, for it is only one of many such. Readers (I am not among them) are free to feel that it is an attempt which has failed. That is not the point. The point is that problems, such as that of representing multiple relationships, have been defined and the attempt upon them unequivocally made. The road has been cleared: others now may trace, and walk upon it. This is one of the most important advances, meaning the full weight of that word, in the art of the novel in this century.

If this were all, it would be very much, but readers (as distinct from students) might well be excused tackling this longish construction. But it is only the beginning of the virtues. The books are fabulously well-written, with an exuberance that evidently leads professional detectors of "bad taste" to detect it, but with a try-anything-once vigour that pays off out of all proportion to any minor deficits it entails in places. It is "a poet's writing," but not in the highly tiresome sense that normally implies: it is rich, not lush. In support of this contention one could quote endlessly, for it is of an almost unfailing distinction of texture. Here is part of a paragraph from *Clea*, describing the wartime arrival by sea, at dawn, in the port of Alexandria:

> A faint and terrible moaning came out across the water towards us, pulsing like the wing-beats of some fearful prehistoric bird—sirens which howled as the damned must howl in limbo. One's nerves were shaken like the branches of a tree. And as if in response to this sound lights began to prick out everywhere, sporadically at first, then in ribbons, bands, squares of crystal. The harbour suddenly outlined itself with complete clarity upon the dark panels of heaven, while long white fingers of powder-white light began to stalk about the sky in ungainly fashion, as if they were the legs of some awkward insect struggling to gain a purchase on the slippery black. A dense stream of coloured rockets now began to mount from the haze among the battleships, emptying on the sky their brilliant clusters of stars and diamonds and smashed pearl snuff-boxes with a marvellous prodigality. The air shook in strokes. Clouds of pink and yellow dust arose with the maroons to shine upon the greasy buttocks of the barrage balloons which were flying everywhere. The very sea seemed to tremble. I had had no idea that we were so near, or that the city could be so beautiful in the mere saturnalia of a war. It had begun to swell up, to expand like some mystical rose of the darkness, and the bombardment kept it company, overflowing the mind. To our surprise we found ourselves shouting at each other.

That is not "well-written" in the lady-novelist's sense. No one would praise its "delicate restraint" or pin it on the fifth-form blackboard. Purists would object to the strained extravagance of "a faint and terrible moaning," to the ungainliness of "long white fingers of powder-white light"; they would quite rightly point out that limbo is precisely not hell and the damned are not in it. Nevertheless the fact remains that the total effect, which is indeed of "stars and diamonds and smashed pearl snuff-boxes with a marvellous prodigality," is wildly outside the scope of Scribbleress, whereas Durrell

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could, an he would, dribble off her kind of stuff in his sleep. But he has better things to dream of. Delicate restraint (a secret, reader, a secret) is so easy.

And then the intelligence. The author has a superb intellect; and moreover he is not interested in stupid people (that greatly annoys Criticus): his characters all possess high intelligence also. He is bored by bores: (others are fascinated). Thus the patronising author-character relationship—"Well, of course, *I* wouldn't be quite so bloody silly as my hero!"—which sours and spoils ninety-nine per cent of modern novels, is quite lacking. Especially is Pursewarden intelligent: it is actually perfectly credible that he should be the author of genuinely brilliant books—one of the very few "famous novelists" of fiction that one can unreservedly believe in.

This play of the intelligence is everywhere. It can, of course, be best illustrated by the aphorisms, largely Pursewarden's:

> Art like life is an open secret.
>
> Science is the poetry of the intellect and poetry the science of the heart's affections.
>
> Poets are not really serious about ideas or people. They regard them much as a Pasha regards the members of an extensive *harim*. They are pretty, yes. They are for use. But there is no question of them being true or false, or having souls. In this way the poet preserves his freshness of vision, and finds everything miraculous.

But it is implicit in the whole tenor of the book.

The characters: they are strong, individual—if anything, too much so (as Brother Criticus will be there to tell us in a moment). They are not the thinly disguised personal projections, the imperfectly bodied ideas, of the "poet's novel." The *Quartet* may be written in "poet's prose": but it is, to an unimprovable degree, a novelist's novel.

Lastly in this actuarial report, though the catalogue could be long extended, come the unforgettable set-pieces—the duck-shoot, the carnival, the death of Narouz. The grimmest critics have agreed to praise them.

Now one cannot do addition-sums in literary values; but a work possessing these merits would appear on the face of it to be worth decent critical attention. But what has been the general atmosphere of its reception?

First let us signalise exceptions. Mr. Philip Toynbee (the only critic whom I shall name in these proceedings) calls it "a work of real importance which deserves to be judged by very high standards indeed. In fact the question which critics will have to ask themselves is not whether these books are good or not but whether or not they constitute a masterpiece. There is a sense," he continues, "in which they are too imperfect to be less"—and goes on to specify numerous imperfections about which one may or not disagree. But he has taken a perfectly proper measure of the work in the first place, and it is only disagreement, not condemnation. Mr. Toynbee is almost alone in this amongst critics of the so-called first rank. The *Quartet* has indeed been rapturously received in some second-class quarters. "A brilliantly imaginative tale shot with moments of real insight and beauty" (*Loamshire Bugle*). "A masterly evocation of the Middle Eastern scene" (*Tintown Clarion*). "Mr. Durrell introduces us to a fabulous array of exotic characters" (*Subtopian Evening Fife*). One takes exception to no word of the appreciations of the excellent nib-pushers of the *Bugle*, *Clarion*, and *Fife*. Yet it must be confessed that they lack authority. Next week they will say the same, in similar terms, of Hilda Pildriver's *Pass the Test-tube, Nurse!* One is (rightly or wrongly) suspicious of a new novel whose back-jacket can only muster commendations from the provinces.

But the mass reaction can only be described as hysteria. Not ostensible hysteria, of course, or only rarely and gleaming through in lurid patches: Brother Criticus does not work like that. He always turns everything inside out: the way to take him is back to front, upside down. So that his hysteria comes out as amused cool condescension, worldliness, urbanity, knowingness, the well-bred giggle at naïvety, the (totally unwarrantable) assumption of the mantle of *déjà vu*. All the same there is a badly frightened rabbit under it. But let us trace him:

1. Durrell is not naturalistic. "This Alexandria is purely a mirage of Durrell's own over-excited mind, not a geographical reality." "Nessim Hosnani, a fabulously rich Coptic businessman who is nowhere shown actually earning his money—there are scores of wishful *données* of this kind, that leave the main characters with all the leisure in the world to compile their diaries and memorise one another's slightest remarks for later regurgitation." "The usual props of the first-person narrator—diaries, unlikely confidences, letters of inconceivable length." "Durrell is everywhere unbelievably slipshod: Pursewarden . . . scrawls line after line of Stendhal on a bathroom mirror with his *shaving-brush*."

Most of these airy charges rebound upon the writers. For what it is worth, I myself passed two unforgettable years in Cairo after the war. Making the proper slight allowances for shifts in space and time, the correspondences of Durrell's Alexandria with what I knew of the

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sister city are extraordinarily exact; to open his covers is simply to step back—I do not mean just the outward scene but the emotional landscapes, the fetid politics, the sexual patterns. Who, pray, is Brother Criticus, to pontificate upon the Alexandria where Durrell, that highly observant and intuitive man, spent many many years being, doing, and watching? One begins to postulate unkind life-histories for Brother Criticus. Born in 1929 to poor but honest trades-unionists in an urban area of the north provinces. Grammar school. State scholarship. Missed the war. Travel: Italy (once), Costa Brava (twice). At present lecturer in English literature in the University College of Tintown. *Loquitur:* "This Alexandria is a mirage, etc."

Has Criticus ever met a "fabulously rich Coptic businessman"? As it happens, I have. God knows when he did his business: he spent his mornings eating *meringues glacés* in Groppi's, his afternoons asleep in his Second Empire bedroom, and his evenings at the Gizeh night-club. Quite probably that *was* where he did his business: he grew no poorer. But of course he went to his office too: *just like Nessim* —"Nessim facing rows and rows of figures and percentages" (*Balthazar*, page 131), and scores of similar passages. Also must I remind Criticus that, will he nill he, there are still many persons luckier than himself who have large unearned incomes and thus the leisure to work out their private and personal destinies in some detail—particularly in Alexandria? Alexandria is not yet in the welfare state. Yes, and the leisure, too, to keep minutely particular diaries and to indite tremendous letters. I have read them, I have received them.

Has Brother Criticus, I wonder, ever seen an Alexandrian bathroom mirror? Mine in Cairo was about nine feet square and encased in meretricious ormulu: no doubt it was intended to reflect the act of loving as well as the act of laving. One could have scrawled upon it half a chapter of *Le Rouge et Le Noir*—especially with one's shaving-*stick*, which is what my text appears to have.

But of course these are mere *argumenta ad subhomines*. Naturalism is no necessary and sufficient good, on the stage or in the novel either. This is a work of imagination, suggestion, evocation, not a court-room file. Read your Richardson, Brother Criticus, your (to pick at random) Dickens, your Dostoievsky and Proust!

2. *Durrell cannot draw credible characters.* "The writer's much-praised gift for parody seems to be finally, almost impatiently, turned against himself." "Caricatures—Scobie, the old reprobate queer, and Pombal, the French amorist." "Sooner or later we see them as standard cut-outs—the muffish young Englishman . . . , the jolly old English reprobate, the comic French erotomaniac, and so on." (The rather hallucinatory repetitions in some of these extracts are due to one of my Criticus' having quite palpably served up a re-hash, with more venom added, of another.)

This is in effect an extension of the previous section. The "modern" preference is for flat characters, will-less characters, characters that are, in a word, characterless. Life, upon which Brother Criticus after all does not hold the monopoly, is not necessarily like that. "Real" persons are largely compromises between individuality and type. Each of us has a natural tendency towards some recognised category, and the pressures of social living, of our images in the eyes of others, are such as to confirm us in it. So we may more conveniently dramatise ourselves and be more conveniently dramatised by others. It is a two-way commerce between life and literature.

Has, please, Brother Criticus ever met a "French amorist"? Many of us have. They conform strangely to what convention would expect of them: but because the type is conventional, the individual is no less real, and the motives that lead a man into adopting "French amorist"

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as his "style" may be deep and complex and worth much consideration. In the "character-squeezes" at the end of *Justine* Durrell defines Pombal as "honey-bear, fleshly opiates." And what happens to Pombal? After a "comic erotomaniac" career he falls genuinely and painfully in love with a woman who, subsequently, bearing her unborn child, is shot dead beside him. That is hardly the matter of farce.

But again, even were Durrell a caricaturist (which is only secondarily and spasmodically the case), what of that? It is a description, not a condemnation. Read your Richardson, etc., Brother Criticus, above all read your Dickens! The novel may embrace caricature without benefit of clergy.

3. Durrell is over-romantic, over-pitched, gothic. "Alexandria, with its child-prostitutes, circumcision booths, and its glamorous, Arabian Nights appeal for the Anglo-Saxon reader." "Stifling catalogues of its doorways and decay interspersed with the appropriate cynicisms." "The touristic tedium." "Shocks are conscientiously worked in." "The list, which I found myself compulsively keeping, is ludicrous: three characters are one-eyed, one humped; one girl is blind, another noseless, another riddled with TB, another pitted with smallpox." "More than a touch of Charles Morgan's stony pomposity in all this, the same irrrelevant hollow grandeur..., a constant rhetorical pitch of utterance, and the ascription of the most arcane culture to the most mundane souls." "The remorseless melodrama of it all."

Someone could write a pretty thesis on the dullness of knowingness. Somehow anyone who is excited or passionate or generous, in his beliefs, in his language, in his actions and reactions, has to be written off as a loony or simpleton. We know better than that in the Criticus Club. Nothing in it, old boy. Bit unEnglish. Got to grow up, old feller.

As ever, Criticus has turned the whole thing upside down. It is unquestionably the uneasy urbanity that is immature. How does this come about? Perhaps the intelligent man usually passes through three stages. Stage One: the young adolescent is idealistic, unsophisticated, simply desiring, sentimental, romantic. Stage Two: the older adolescent or young man "sees through" all this, he acquires a superficial blaséness, hardness, cynicism, *knowingness*. Stage Three: if he progresses beyond this point, the mature man selects from each of the preceding stages what is good in it. He strikes a balance. Knowing that love and beauty and terror and happiness and all the other unfashionable things are, after all, to be found in life, he may well become a "romantic" again, but a reasoned romantic not a moony schoolboy. He will no longer be ashamed to be serious. But (unlike a member of the so-called "Brains" Trust this very week of writing, who laughed off the distinction as risibly far-fetched) he will not confuse being serious with being solemn.

Now it seems to me that Criticus is arrested at Stage Two. And he looks at such "Stage Three" persons as Durrell and Pursewarden and finds them "romantic." So, since his neck-muscles are adapted to looking downwards and not upwards, he assumes (*dear* little Noddy!) that they in their turn have been arrested at Stage One. Of course he would assume it. Here he is again at his loftiest: "Yet an untouched immaturity seems to underlie the worldliness, a schoolboy yearning to inspire the dreams. A talent for cryptic *aperçus* is no substitute for humane understanding." Brother Criticus, of course, *has* humane understanding: he must have, because he is so jolly clipped and Brit. However, as Pursewarden points out, the speechlessness of the English may be regarded as diagnostic of their emotional immaturity.

Perhaps the attitude may be best illumined by a parallel. The extracts at the head of this section are all from a single review (the worst of a bad bunch) in a weekly periodical. A few pages on, a young woman is letting us know about childbirth: "Birth is just a dull chore that nobody wants to hear about and the sooner we stop regarding it as 'the supreme agony' (E. M. Forster), 'a quasi-mystical experience' (Dick-Read), 'a beautiful event' (women's magazines), 'a great mystery' (my Vicar), or 'rather fun' (graduate wives) the better. It's a clever little bit of mechanics, that's all." That, in all its dreary little smartness and sensibleness, its importunate mediocrity, hits the tone precisely.

Starting from such false premisses, it is not surprising that conclusions are wild. Has Brother Criticus ever examined the hospital statistics of Alexandria? They bear no great resemblance to those of Welwyn Garden City. Nothing could be more fabulously off the point than to twit Durrell with "conscientious shocks" and "appropriate cynicisms," unless it were the unbelievably unhappy invocation of Charles Morgan. Mr. Toynbee provides the sane corrective: "He is a romantic by temperament, dazzlingly exuberant in style and vision, reckless in ambition, wonderfully prolific in invention."

4. Durrell knows nothing of love. "Mr. Durrell describes it as 'an investigation of modern love' (three queers, a lesbian, a nymphomaniac raped in childhood, and an incestuous brother and sister figure on some of the slides)." "Love in any real sense finds small place in these pages. Obsession, adoration, infatuation, sexual focuses—all these; but the niceties of

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love, modern or not, are hardly touched on." "The eye and the brain are at work incessantly: the heart of the books remains cold."

Once again this will be seen to be an extension of the preceding section. Brother Criticus is now standing on his head and waving. Nothing can better illustrate the masquerading of hysteria as urbanity. We know about this love stuff, old lad. It's a clever little bit of mechanics, that's all. Pretty boyish, isn't it, to make a fuss? After all, most chaps have a bit of a go before they get married but it's when you've got a wife you can really get down to it.

Now in this last friend Criticus may be right, but one doubts if he is the man to say it. A naughty postscriptum to his biography: Married (1956) Jennifer, 27, occupational therapist, elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Smiff, of Cleethorpes: one son (Jonathan), one daughter (Gillian). Extra-marital: two tarts (1950, 52), no go; one schoolteacher, plain and nervous (1953–54). Has Criticus known obsession, infatuation? Has he adored? Or has he just stood on one leg and itched a bit? We do not sit upon him in judgment or say. Has he or has he not observed that Darley's love-affair with Clea is a desperately painfully-achieved relationship that is clearly destined to survive and be a "marriage"?

The remark about the heart of the books remaining cold is so wildly the geometrical opposite of the truth about this passionately involved work that one is left gasping. It is precisely when one finds statements flying so blatantly in the teeth of demonstrable truth that one diagnoses hysteria. "Mr. Durrell," says Toynbee, "has written about a dozen real love-stories, entwined them, explored them with a truly Proustian ferocity."

PS. from Criticus: Proust knew nothing of love either.

5. *Durrell cannot construct.* "I can detect no real pattern, trace no compelling theme, in his extravagantly-coloured carpet." "'A word continuum' (whatever that means)."

This is dismissible without ceremony. It is only another, though a startling, illumination of the inside-outness of Criticus. I have never been much impressed with persons who take space in public print to inform me that they cannot detect what others, and I, detect easily. We may interpolate here the Criticus who complains that Clea has her right hand "arbitrarily" mangled. One might at least *read* the book one is criticussing: the accident is most formally and meticulously "prepared." *Continuum* means what it does in "space-time continuum," as Durrell patently explains.

6. *Durrell is would-be smart, Durrell is would-be worldly.* "Pursewarden, who is supposed to be a great writer, does no more than trot out a few old-fashioned *mots* of the common-room." "His smart talk of 'relativity.'" "Mr. Durrell is not the first *débutant* to confuse cynicism with maturity, or cleverness with wisdom."

Well, we know how to read Criticus by now, I should hope. Durrell is always radiantly intelligent; I would say unremittingly intelligent did that not imply forcing—and the only forcing a really intelligent man must do (and the eternal necessity of it goes far to break his heart, and his mind too, often) is that of simulating stupidity lest he offend his fellows. "Where," says Pursewarden in one of the key sentences of the books, "where can a man who really thinks take refuge in the so-called real world without defending himself against stupidity by the constant exercise of equivocation? Tell me that." Inside himself, dimly, Criticus realises that, so far as the intelligence race goes, he is a non-starter; and it is of course this outraged sense of inferiority that in the first place induces his hysteria.

ENOUGH of that. Tripping past, face averted, Criticus rushes on to pay his ill-phrased homage to a small careful provincial pot-boiler. What *does* he prefer? We infer it by negatives. Short, certainly: restrained in style: confined in material: "sensitive": "thoughtful": and the author just slightly patronises his characters and invites the reader to join him. Not quite Colette, but perhaps Colette with the fun (and of course the "naïvety") taken out. Not quite Sagan, but perhaps Sagan with the conventional morality put in. The modern-classical French novel in fact: and when he gets it Criticus raises his reedy cheer (pretty soon he gets bored with his gruel, but that's another story).

Yet the comic thing is that it is precisely the French who have at once accorded Durrell his proper stature. Is Frère Critique the better man? One doubts it. The French neglect, the English discovery, of Proust about makes dishonours even. But it was the unFrenchness of Proust that the French rejected then; and it is the unFrenchness of Durrell that, bored to tears with their own "good manners," they are welcoming now. The mechanisms underlying these climatic changes I must however leave to the ruminations of my readers.

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Quo Status?

The Status Seekers. By VANCE PACKARD. *Longmans.* 21s.

TO JUDGE from some reactions, Mr. Packard has established himself almost at one throw as a favourite American sociologist with certain British readers and reviewers, and it is not hard to see why. After all, the survival of class distinctions in a changing British society has since the war been a constant uneasy talking-point at our dinner tables. Following the lead of George Orwell, writers from Anthony Crosland to Kingsley Amis to Richard Hoggart have in their different ways demonstrated that current economic and educational levelling in Britain has not yet been accompanied by a sufficient lowering of class-barriers, to the consequent impoverishment of British life; and in this connection envious looks have been cast at the younger, evidently freer, and more classless society across the Atlantic. Yet here, and with apparent assurance, comes Mr. Packard, to tell us not merely that under the impact of mass advertising, big corporations and housing development, American society is being rapidly restratified into new classes. He also contrives to give the impression that these new American class-barriers are already more rigid, disagreeable, and productive of anxiety than corresponding distinctions in Britain and other older European societies. No wonder that for British readers with a sense of class-guilt, *The Status Seekers* seems to provide agreeable rectification.

Now, on the face of it, Mr. Packard's European-American comparison appears to me to contain a good deal of quite simple nonsense. But just to make sure, to check whether the country across which I travelled extensively a few years ago had really changed so much, I found myself asking some young acquaintances back from the United States for their views. They included: one well-known writer, two young women who had worked across the Atlantic as affluent secretaries, and three students back from American universities. One and all were agreed that their visits had provided "a refreshing break from the narrowness of English class-isolation" —that in the United States they had "mixed more freely" with far more people from a far greater variety of backgrounds than they could have met over here. No doubt this is still the common experience. I feel, indeed, that had Mr. Packard to live for three months in a typical English village, the sort that English detective-story authors like to write about, the minutiæ of its class distinctions would pretty swiftly drive him round the bend.

The fault is, I think, in the method: *The Status Seekers* bears the same relation to a genuine sociological study that the latest, much-boosted American best-seller bears to a classic novel. This is not an entirely derogatory comparison. A best-selling American novel, though it may be superficial, usually contains a good central idea round which everything is highly efficiently constructed. Similarly, in asserting that his "hidden persuaders," the advertisers, are making Americans steadily more status-conscious, Mr. Packard has got himself a good persuasive thesis—in broad terms no one would quarrel with it. But how far is his picture in proportion?

For Mr. Packard, Europe's old society with its still traditional class-distinctions has a plain attraction. In a conversation with an Italian gondolier (enviably free from "status worry"), he asked how one became a gondolier. The answer was satisfying and simple: "By being the son of a gondolier." It is at such a point that one wants to interrupt the author with an impatient "How's that again?—Where's your statistical check?" For if one took 100 gondoliers, might it not turn out that only 18 were sons of gondoliers and 82 were not, and anyway half the gondolas were operated by financial syndicates! One can see what Mr. Packard is

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roughly after: an extrovert Italian who eats, drinks, sings, and makes love in the manner fitting to a gondolier in a still traditional society has probably less "status anxiety" than an American suburbanite. A fair point; but what Mr. Packard does not suggest is any understanding of how the Italian gondolier himself *really* regards his life and how he would compare it with that of an emigrated cousin now more affluently running a petrol station in Connecticut.

Mr. Packard's view of the British class-structure seems even more blurred. Making the point that England has advanced ahead of the United States in providing its brightest children with the best education regardless of family finance, he produces the following strange passage:

> At the secondary level, sons of tradesmen and trade union leaders and working-men go to Eton in considerable numbers virtually expense free. These bright boys of non-*élite* families from the state schools are called "guinea pigs" because a long-term experiment has been in progress to see what happens when U and non-U boys are mixed, with origins kept secret as far as possible.

Again one can see what he is after. Within the stratified British society, the 1944 Education Act has provided ladders which quite probably may make it easier for a bright working-class boy to become a scientist at Cambridge than for his American counterpart to reach an exclusive college like Harvard. Our young novelists have shown that equivalent social acceptance for working-class graduates is by no means easy (quite a few go on annually to American universities). Even so, the reference to state scholarships is valid, but in Mr. Packard's case it is marred by inadequate knowledge about grammar schools and odd notions about Eton.

If I have dwelt on Mr. Packard's highly approximate ideas about Europe it is because they raise queries how far his assertions about America are more accurate. He must know more about Groton than Eton, but just how much more? His generalisations, certainly, are arresting. As he sees it, all around is "stratification." What some Americans still like to regard sentimentally as their free, open society of independent entrepreneurs and professional men and farmers has not only been transformed but is rapidly being taken over by the all-powerful corporations, whose top executives have crystallised into a new ruling *élite* buttressed by a system of jealously exclusive residential areas, clubs, colleges. The countless employees of the corporations are being fitted into a hierarchy of classes, firmly graded according to the status of their work. Below them, automation and semi-automation are steadily alienating Americans of the subordinate classes from any link with creative work and turning them into mere cogs. On the consumption side, American advertisers meanwhile ceaselessly urge Americans to upgrade themselves by way of material possessions ("keeping up with the Rockefellers"), thus creating perpetual anxiety. This is being intensified by a new factor, the new system of mass manufacture of homes in one-community suburbs, graded not only horizontally by status but also ethnically, or vertically, as to whether the owners are "white or coloured," "Gentiles or Jews," white- or blue-collar workers, and so turning the great American nation of sturdy individualists still further into one of segregated and status-dominated groups.

In all this one can go a certain way along with Mr. Packard. Many social processes he describes are happening, but as society is always complex the question is to what degree, and what other processes are also going on? Here, by simplifying, Mr. Packard fails to become a guide. Take the "alienation" of the average American from his work. I have seen a recent report of yet another British mission to the United States whose trade union members were above all impressed by the way in which workers in America, from technician to telephone-girl and soda-fountain-jerk, seemed to derive far more pleasure from performing their work efficiently than was the case in Britain. When Mr. Packard speaks, as he does constantly, of "the American dream," one must question whether the bourgeois America of yesterday was as classless as he imagines. Leaving aside class-and-caste societies like New England and the South, it is clear that even American small-town life had its distinct class-divisions, expressed for instance in who married whom. American class and classlessness, in other words, were always more subtle concepts than Mr. Packard gives them credit for, and are to-day changing in more subtle ways.

This really is the crux. The social changes in America are important. But what Mr. Packard constantly does is to say hurriedly what other American writers have already said better. What he has to say about the distortion in the American economy, and the decline in public services, caused by an eleven-billion-dollar-a-year advertising industry which constantly stimulates artificial wants, has already been stated much more succinctly by Professor J. K. Galbraith in *The Affluent Society*. Though evidently hardly known to Mr. Packard, American left-wing writers have for a long time and in detail pointed out that a minority of citizens have not shared in the American capitalist boom and the fabulous prosperity of the majority. His claim that American doctors have kept earnings high by

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restricting numbers (which is the case not only in the U.S.) is a familiar item in the debate about "socialised medicine." On the Negro question he has little new to say. Nor about anti-Semitism. His chapter on segregation between Jews and non-Jews in clubs and suburbs (which he criticises) will add little to a reader familiar with the existing vast literature, painfully analysing, to give an instance, whether the 14 per cent Jewish proportion among students at Princeton does or does not imply "discrimination." (Incidentally, he also ignores the positive element in the cultural Jewish revival in America.) Similarly, where he criticises the growing practice by corporations of treating a college degree as qualification for employment, he ignores the positive side of the extraordinary expansion of American college (as opposed to university) education as a possibly highly valuable way of training a white-collar class.

On lesser matters, too, Mr. Packard is busily discovering the well-known. That the American upper crust favours a "restrained British way of life" has been known to the British export trade for decades; that in smart American circles foreign cars and cooking and styles are now the thing is familiar to every reader of *The New Yorker*. When Mr. Packard picks out a snob housing advertisement which is actually worded in French, this makes a nice reviewer's quote—but would the delightfully bizarre advertisements of Mr. Roy Brooks, of London, S.W., be any more representative of ordinary house agents in Leeds or Liverpool? Mr. Packard disconcerts most of all in his changes of tone. At one moment he is the serious sociologist, the next, talking in magazine language about "a lovely, gracious, brilliant Polish Catholic girl attending Jonesville High School. . . ." One can go on picking such faults, and yet, in the end, *The Status Seekers* remains a provocative book.

Mr. Packard has had a hunch, and with his idea of "status in modern society" he is on to something. Perhaps just because he writes impressionistically, because he is no conventional left-wing critic of society (and so treats advertising as much too independent of the economic interests it serves), he has caught the symptoms more clearly. At any rate, the reading of *The Status Seekers* turned my mind to three problems of which I wish we had fuller analyses.

First, there is the reminder that Western capitalism is not a static but a dynamic economic machine, making for continuous technical and social change. At present, the concentration of production in giant units is tending towards the disappearance of the "old bourgeois social order" of yesterday as surely as country roads are yielding to highways. The unpleasant "inner contractions" of the new social order are beginning to emerge clearly.

Secondly, it appears that once mass manufacture has reached the size attained, for example, by the American motor industry, it does generate a trend to divide its customers by advertising into convenient fixed market grades—a Chevrolet grade, a Buick grade, a Cadillac grade. One can also see the advantage to manufacturers of using high-powered advertising to keep customers firmly in these grades by associating them with social status—but this means that both the consumer and the consumer's goods carry a common label.

Thirdly, there is the new fact in American life of the mass manufacture by large-scale enterprise of actual homes. One can see how, once this starts, the most profitable method for *entrepreneurs*—with houses as with cars—is to construct standardised one-community suburbs which are either all-white, or all white-collar middle-class or working-class, all-Gentile or all-Jewish.

I think this last danger concerns Britain most. As for "status emphasis" in general, and this Mr. Packard has guessed, the vogue for it in changing societies seems international: one hears complaints about this from new Afro-Asian states and from Soviet Russia. But Britain actu-

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JOHN MURRAY

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ally invented the one-community suburb—as usual, from the best motives, when 19th-century pioneers like Ebenezer Howard produced the new living pattern of the entirely middle-class English suburb, among whose shady back-lawns and gay tennis clubs the grime at the other end of Coketown could be kept out of mind as well as sight. This excessive geographic separation, I feel, has always been a weakness of English life, leading to lack of contact between classes.

To-day I feel uneasy about the Council Estates. They, too, were set up for the best reasons (slum clearance), but what is troubling is the way they remain one-class communities. The working-class families on the Estates are far better off, yet socially curiously confined. Recently I heard a schoolmaster from one of the largest estates just outside London say: "The place was a flipping ghetto from the start. Working-class families and no one else were just pushed into it and to-day you have a lot of angry young men on the estate. The children inherit the insecurity of the parents. . . ." Michael Young and Peter Willmott, in their investigation of East End families transplanted into suburban Essex, found that they had lost much of the comforting community sense of the East End slum street. In their mass-patterned, modern little houses they tended to feel "isolated," "suspicious," and suddenly worried about "status." In other words, questions of class and status in our current levelled society may in various ways prove difficult. If Mr. Packard has not (as he thinks) analysed and answered the problem, he has certainly advertised it—and this is his merit.

T. R. Fyvel

Anti-Bourgeois Legend

The Dandy. By Ellen Moers. *Secker & Warburg*. 36s.

The endless, somewhat tedious alternation of stuffy respectability and vulgar raffishness that colours the progress of English manners has never been so sharply underlined as in the passage from the Prince Regent to the Prince Consort, and back again from the Prince Consort to the Prince of Wales. Reams of more subtle, more documented examinations of the Victorian ethos have been poured out since the love-hatred essays of Lytton Strachey, but one thing surely has emerged with even greater clarity: whatever its virtues, the middle-class mould of the Victorian era pressed with cruel and loathed heaviness upon almost every Victorian man or woman of genius. There has never, perhaps, been such a time of honoured great men who distrusted or feared the society that had honoured them. The rhythms of manners in France had on its own level the same dreary alternation from devout to libertine; it did not altogether beat in time with the English, but the general deadening mass of bourgeois standards pressed no less acutely on French writers. In such an age the aristocratic qualities of arrogance, elegance, uselessness, ennui, disenchantment, and coldness inevitably acquired the force of revolutionary virtues. The dandies of the Regency became a scandalous legend of all that a useful, sober, domestic, frugal society abhorred; and consequently, by various stages, a heroic legend for all those upon whom that society pressed hardly. In the process were developed anti-legends—for example, the Victorian gentleman. Yet the dandy hero himself suffered many transformations; what is remarkable perhaps is that in this ballad the source remained a recognisable memory, although Brummell, the origin of it all, might have been perplexed to see himself in Barbey d'Aurevilly, Baudelaire, or Beerbohm's Lord George Hell.

It is this anti-bourgeois legend in all its many guises and off-shoots that Miss Moers traces from its source, Brummell, to its last conscious archaist, Beerbohm, in self-exile at Rapallo. The theme is a very rich one and runs deep into the sources of 19th-century art, manners, ethics, and sexual morals. It is surprising that no one has explored it before; but the subtlety, learning, and vigorous engagement with which Miss Moers has carried through her quest can only make one glad that she is first on the scene.

Brummell, the source, is in many ways the most interesting figure of all dandy-history. He is, so to speak, the dandy *pur*, with none of the brilliant man's exploitation for other ends that we find in Disraeli or Wilde, with none of the doubts of d'Orsay, the religiosity of Barbey d'Aurevilly, or the intellectual genius of Baudelaire. For Brummell, dandyism was elegance, a manner of dressing exquisite yet austere—far from the rings, flash waistcoats, boutonnières, and so on, of Disraeli or Dickens or Wilde—and an exclusive way of living, which, though it had ideal overtones, was expressed in pure action. He created a legend about himself; he said one or two brilliant things; but, for the most part, he lived by gesture, movement, silence, and bearing. As Miss Moers very successfully brings him to life from Captain Jesse and the few other scanty sources, he appears a trifle mad. Yet very wisely she chooses throughout the book to eschew pathological investigation. Mad or not, Brummell was the perfect basic material, because so free of theory, from

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which the French followers of dandyism, Balzac, Sue, d'Aurevilly, and Baudelaire so characteristically gradually built up their intellectual construct of the century's revolt by disdain.

It was through this century-long transformation of Brummell and finally through the incredibly unBrummel-like figure of Des Esseintes that the dandy returned to Dorian Gray and his native country. Disgusted by the publicity aspect of his early career, Miss Moers, I think, does less than justice to Oscar Wilde. In particular he was the most articulate exponent of that improbable coalition of Left politics and dandyism, of which Eugene Sue was an earlier example. Wilde's sexual tastes may have been responsible for his enunciation of the revolutionary value of the criminal or undeserving poor, but, in so doing, he foreshadowed Shaw.

Much earlier in the century, Victorian critics of Lord Lytton and the "silver fork school" of novelists had already noted the conjunction of the criminal mob and the dandy world. It was, in fact, only natural that the two sections left over from the 18th century, the two reprobates —Rowlandson and gin palaces, Cruickshank and the cravat—should have found common ground among the grey, soggy, suet-pudding world that had no place for them. Yet it was indeed odd that Lytton should have had major successes with the arch-exquisite "Pelham" and the criminal "Paul Clifford."

It is to be noted that Dickens in his early days feared the old Hogarthian mob of "Barnaby Rudge" as much as he detested the dandy Sir John Chester. Yet, as Miss Moers shows, the pressures of Victorian success were to produce a strange change in him. No one, so far as I know, has plotted as Miss Moers does the arrival of the decadent, the *fin de siècle* young man and the old decayed dandy in one novel, *Our Mutual Friend*, as the two principal "good" male characters. Her chapter on Dickens, in fact, is a pioneer and excellent one; though in her desire to make her case, she pushes, I think, too far. Pip, for example, is something less and more than a dandy. Nor does she take into account in Dickens' ambivalent attitude to the public school exquisite, his discontent and rivalry with his expensively educated sons. But it is a masterly chapter, as is the one on Thackeray in which she discusses the "gentleman" ideal which the mid-Victorians opposed to the "dandy." It is, as with everything else in Thackeray, ambiguous, to say the least, that Major Pendennis should in the end gain his creator's admiration, and Colonel Newcome his expressed boredom.

What brought the dandy tradition to an end? Miss Moers suggests very plausibly that it was the emergence of the New Woman; after that he could take only two paths—the overt homosexuality of Firbank or the conscious museum existence of Beerbohm. Yet I am not so sure that the dandy, unambiguous sexually, up-to-date, mocking, exquisite, arrogant, and cold-hearted may not be found again and again among the dead of Ypres and the Somme. I wish that Miss Moers had ended her brilliant history with those three 1914 war heroes and victims—Saki, the dandy of letters; T. E. Hulme, the dandy of the intellect; and the stage idol, who sang "Gilbert the Filbert, the Colonel of the Nuts."

Angus Wilson

Re-thinking Imperialism

The End of Empire. By JOHN STRACHEY. *Gollancz.* 30s.

"DOWNWARD the course of empire takes its way." Berkeley amended might serve as a text for this remarkable book. But it should hastily be added that this is no complacent, naïve pæan over the deserved death of the rapacious robbers and rulers (in that order) of our brown brethren. It is, instead, an extremely acute, unbiased, well-informed and, above all, sagacious and courageous study of a great current problem, not only an epitaph on the end of empire but a discussion of where we go from there, a discussion made all the more valuable and intelligible because of the merits of the discussion of the rise and rôle of empires that are now dead—and a little too easily damned.

It would be wise to say something to begin with about the method of this book. Mr. Strachey provides an example of imperialism at its worst and at its best, both drawn from the history of British India. (There is an interesting excursus on Egypt under British occupation, but apart from providing explanations for Colonel Nasser and making "Suez" even more odd in retrospect, the Egyptian section is not essential to the argument.) India provides the test case, and here Mr. Strachey candidly and profitably calls on his family history to assess the merits and defects of the most extraordinary empire of all, the ruling of hundreds of millions of remote and deeply alien peoples by a handful of exiles from the other side of the globe. It is his argument (and I think a totally valid one) that we must allow for the public spirit and intelligence of the Stracheys as well as for the rapacity of Clive and the early pillagers of Bengal. And we are entitled to bring into our balance-sheet, as

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against the debit of early British rule, the credit of the way it ended and the light cast on British rule by the present comparative political sagacity of Indian government. (Pakistan is another matter to which Mr. Strachey only alludes in what may be too optimistic a note.)

All of this is most admirably done and the new view of Indian history is welcome, for Mr. Strachey pays the Indians the compliment of treating them like adults and notes that there must have been great weaknesses in Indian (and Chinese) society to make the imperialist task so comparatively easy. And the British didn't invent, if they didn't cure, some of the most pressing Indian problems. Indeed, Mr. Strachey makes the valid point that Marx (whom he quotes to much purpose) exaggerated the effect of British rule in breaking "the cake of custom." The British didn't do enough. They were too respectful of the Indian way of life. This view I believe to be just as applied to British rule in India in modern times, but is it just as applied to pre-Mutiny India? Macaulay and Dalhousie were not timid in their views or actions. The Mutiny was a watershed. Mr. Strachey rightly stresses the improvement in moral tone of British rule after the end of the Company (he tends to put the Haileybury influence too late; I.C.S. members didn't need to go to Malthus' old college to imbibe *laissez-faire* doctrines). By the time of the Second War, we were propping up an obsolete form of society and had lost the faith required to innovate with confidence. It was that complacent, if you like Philistine, faith that enabled Macaulay and his associates to give India the oldest Asiatic class trained in the new (Western) learning.

But if Mr. Strachey has a just view of the merits of the I.C.S. (including the non-Stracheys in its ranks), he is sometimes unjust to it. It is outrageous that mere doctrine, the immutable verities of political economy prevented effectual dealing with famine (the more so that the Irish famine had provided a very expensive lesson under the noses of the ruling class). But *laissez-faire* was not totally maleficent as a rule of government. Mr. Strachey quotes Macaulay's Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, on the disastrous effects of the exposure of Indian hand-loom weavers to Lancashire competition. The implication seems to be that the government of British India ought to have "protected" the native village industry. The doctrinaire rulers of India would have thought that was exploitation of the consumers. (Good Liberals like T. H. Green thought protection was not only inadvisable but wrong, a form of theft.) But their doctrines also saved them from the temptation to control the Indian economy by tariffs in favour of British industry. All protection is a result of the balancing of vested interests. Can we doubt which would have prevailed at this time if the Indian Government had not been saved by its own politico-religious beliefs from the temptation to impose a *"pacte colonial"* of the French type on India? Even if "India" had been protected, the gainers would have been the textile magnates of Bombay who would have become millionaires a generation sooner.

There is in this, the most dramatic and probably the most valuable section of the book, a serious gap. There is no mention of the other Asian empires, French and Dutch, except in brief, categorical, and pejorative terms. No doubt much of the criticism is justified. The Dutch and the French didn't know when they were beaten, or even allow for the catastrophic effects of British abandonment of the imperial rôle. But Dutch rule and French rule had some of the merits of British rule. (There is no cheap and painless way of being born again into the modern world.) And if all that Mr. Strachey says about the folly of French obstinacy in Algeria is just, he simplifies the problem. "Solutions are the problems of others," as a French friend remarked to me. When it is quite certain that we shall have no further trouble in the Rhodesias or Kenya or when the Government of Northern Ireland finds itself able to relax a bit, I shall join in Mr. Strachey's unconditional condemnation. But to right the balance, he has not noticed one asset that we had in India that we gained from our social snobbery, from the status of our Stracheys. We did not export to India (as the French did to Indo-China) a lower class of white officials. We created a ruling aristocracy, the I.C.S., into which it was possible to admit Indians just because there was no mass of white employees beneath them. It is this class, as much as the *"colons,"* who are a nuisance in Algeria.

From this brilliant case history, Mr. Strachey turns to theory. He examines Hobson and Lenin, refutes Palme Dutt and Coran with all the more effect that, as a quasi-Marxist (or should I say an ex-Marxist?) he knows what the terms of the argument are. He is aiming at the target, not firing on a different target. And he is equally good in estimating the scale of the "drain," the unrequited tribute that Britain drew from India. The tone is rightly polemical at times, but never acrid and never a matter of scoring points. There is, on the other hand, none of the B.B.C.-panel habit of coming to a bogus consensus. Mr. Palme Dutt is wrong, not merely emphasising different aspects of a common truth—and he is wrong because Marx was wrong as a prophet, although the concept of empire will never be the same since Marx examined it.

I have only one serious criticism to make and it is simply to regret a decision Mr. Strachey

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made, possibly for reasons of space. He does not discuss the rôle of Latin America as an area of "imperial aggression." This he justifies on grounds that I believe are inadequate to justify his decision. It may normally be right to confine "imperialism" to the rule of one body politic over another. Certainly there is a lot to be said for rejecting the use of "imperialism" as a word of infinite plasticity. And it is probably true that, as a rule, an independent state, even a backward one like Siam, does better on its own than subjugated neighbours like Burma and Tonkin. But it seems to me that there can be cases when it is not tampering with the meaning of words to see "imperialism" when there is no formal imposition of a foreign political rule, and it also seems to me that there are or have been cases in which the imperial rulers (for purely selfish reasons, if you like) have more effectually protected their subjects against economic exploitation than an indigenous "independent" government might have done.

Spanish America provides examples of both these neglected truths. Weak, corrupt, ever-changing independent governments were obviously and conspicuously open to foreign pressure. There is the theme and lesson of that great political parable, Conrad's *Nostromo*. The symbol of foreign capitalism, "the Mine," finally has its patience exhausted; it will not consent to be bled to the point of ruin—so the revolution setting up the Oriental Republic succeeds. And as Conrad goes on to show, its success is self-destructive; "the Mine" is threatened in another way. So is the aristocratic ruling class that "the Mine" had patronised. What Conrad wrote as parable, happened often enough in fact. There was the United Fruit Company as well as "the Mine." (Richard Harding Davis' imitation of Kipling, *Soldiers of Fortune*, is a kind of schoolboy's *Nostromo* with the Americans, not the British supporting the forces of decency and solvency.) This story was repeated all over Latin America. Sometimes, all the imperialist, or, if you like, capitalist interests could combine in support of and jointly profit by a "sound" native government. From this point of view, Diáz was a Mexican Cromer, a less enlightened Cromer but, fiscally speaking, just as reliable and efficient. Sometimes the foreign interests clashed. Thus the Chilean Civil War of 1891 can be seen as a contest between the British party (the navy, the aristocracy) and the American party, supported by the army and led by that Perón before his time, Balmaceda. The British side won—and Chile was nearly involved in war with the United States. (Chile might have won.) It is unnecessary to recall Venezuela, Panama, Haiti; the "independence" of these states was qualified.

Moreover, it could be argued that they got the worst of both worlds, their independence was partly illusory, their instability and insolvency real. A great many South American republics were bled by dictators as extravagant as Ismail Pasha. Their "drain" was represented by money put away in London and Paris, spent in Paris and Monte Carlo. Loans were bad risks and interest consequently high. (Some of the worst examples occurred just before the smash of 1929.) And just as Cromer managed the finances of Egypt better than the Khedive (with correspondingly better credit ratings), so the French managed the finance of Tunis (which had its own petty Ismail). Under imperial rule, British or French, Khedives and Beys were not allowed to plunder and waste the public assets as they had done on their own. (I have a lot of sympathy with the British officials who deposed Mr. E. M. Forster's charming prince.) It is not mere bravado that makes me pose the question, would not some South American states have been less exploited "imperialistically" if they had lost their independence?

The last part of this remarkable book is a plea for seeing the realities of the present situation, abandoning the idea that the profit system as such will meet the needs for capital of the 80 per cent under-privileged population of the world. This is admirably put and argued, although I could have wished for a little comment on the trouble that poor nations (or even potentially rich nations like Argentina) make for themselves because of xenophobia. And a Socialist like Mr. Strachey might have been expected to notice that the Arab ownership of oil reserves gives them an income which is a very pure example of that most discredited form of unearned income, "rent." I could have liked something, too, on the sideline profits of imperial rule, the honest but convenient giving of contracts to nationals of the imperial power. I could have liked something, too, on the attractiveness of the imperial career, not only to able young Stracheys but to ambitious and poor young Irishmen like the later Lord Macdonell and Sir Michael O'Dwyer. The I.C.S. was very public-spirited, but it was also very highly paid—and no Germans or Italians need apply. I should have liked some discussion of Russian imperialism not only in countries like Poland and Hungary, but in Central Asia. But we are given so much that it is presumptuous to ask for more. The Labour Party is continually being told to "re-think" its premisses or just to "think" them. Here we have both "think" and "re-think" of a very high order and for that one can forgive bad spelling and the attribution of a famous dictum of Justice Holmes to Harold Laski.

D. W. Brogan

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New Novels

The Cave. By Robert Penn Warren. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 18s.

The Great Fortune. By Olivia Manning. *Heinemann.* 16s.

The Vodi. By John Braine. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 16s.

Eating People Is Wrong. By Malcolm Bradbury. *Secker & Warburg.* 18s.

The cave is hardly the best novel in this batch, but it is certainly the longest, and its author's reputation stands high in some quarters, so I shall begin with it. The setting—Tennessee, where men are men, and so on—is as much a literary danger-area as precious Chelsea or surly Redbrick. The "strong" story, of a young man trapped in a cave, resembles, as has been pointed out, the film *Ace in the Hole*. But this does not really get going till half-way through, and seems to be mainly a device for giving us tensed-up biographies, largely in flashback (the whole thing reeks of Vistavision), of the big cast of characters. There's a good ration of sex, of the sort that set me wondering if someone somewhere hasn't described Penn Warren as a "splendidly masculine writer," a "man's man" regaling us with after-dinner leching tales at some dreary stag-party. I do not deny that the sexy bits achieve a certain functional success: they make the book more readable. And there are occasional descriptive passages throughout which show that Penn Warren does have natural literary gifts, if only he didn't squander them so.

He can handle narrative, too—but then, so, as far as I remember, could the author of *Gone With the Wind*. The Americans specialise in this kind of huge T-bone steak of a novel, and it certainly makes a change from the sniggering tedium of some contemporary English fiction. And certain themes—especially perhaps Ikey Sumpter's love-affair with a Jewish girl and his ambivalent attitude to Judaism—are handled with assurance and ease: this is the "man talking to men" side of American fiction which, as Cyril Connolly pointed out years ago, we have most reason to envy. All the same, despite its opulent self-confidence and its clever strip-techniques, *The Cave* is much too long, and aspires to a grandeur which it fails to attain. It is effective —that is, it obviously "works" for some readers —but it is not memorable.

The great fortune is a witty, charming, and civilised novel. The first volume of a trilogy, it is about the English colony in Bucharest during the winter and spring of 1939-40, and in particular about Guy Pringle, an English lecturer at the University, and his relationships with his wife Harriet and his friends. Guy is a saintlike innocent, endowed with authority and charm, "a man born to expend himself like a whirlwind—and indeed what could one do but love him?" This Harriet attempts, though she finds it difficult, being more "grown-up" than her husband, more of a realist, more of a worrier. Miss Manning handles this central contrast of temperaments beautifully, refusing sentimentality, mock-heroics, or any of the trappings of melodrama which beset husbands and wives in modern fiction. Instead of rebelling against the whirlwind, Harriet accepts it; at first baffled and resentful at Guy's careless absorption in work and friends and at the way he seems both to do without her and to take her for granted, she gradually, we feel, comes to understand his need, and his ability, to escape into his own world, while she must remain in the cold loneliness of reality with its disappointments and dangers. All this is symbolised and brought together in the final chapters, in which Guy successfully produces his friends and students in *Troilus and Cressida* (Harriet has no part, because Guy says their relationship would get in the way); while, to the west, the phoney war becomes real as Hitler marches across Europe. The book ends with the English colony celebrating the first night of *Troilus*, as the news breaks that the Germans are in Paris.

I think that in this ending, as well as in the character of Guy, Miss Manning shows an insight into English character which is deeper than may at first appear. The book is deceptively restrained and light: the local colour nicely done, the subsidiary characters funny. The writing is an object lesson in good manners. Miss Manning controls her narrative with the gentlest possible touch; one is never pushed or hurried, but has that rare and blessed sense of there being spaces between words: this is a matter of texture, and few writers have mastered it; but when you meet one who has, you notice it at once.

The Vodi is not as sensational as *Room at the Top* and doubtless will not sell as many copies: but it is readable, professional, and reasonably entertaining. In some ways I found it more interesting than *Room at the Top*, perhaps because success-stories of the Joe Lampton type don't interest me much. The only trouble is that one can't help feeling failure-stories, of which this is one, don't really interest Mr. Braine, but that he thought he had better try it next; and so gives us a slightly vague piece of story-telling which lacks the crude power and drive of its predecessor. Dick Corvey, the hero, is a nice boy, but he has no job, no prospects, no wife, and T.B. He and his boyhood friend Tom (a Lampton type) invented in their

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younger days a fantasy to explain why some people are always unlucky. These are the ones "Nelly" has it in for. "Nelly" is an obscene old woman who runs a gang of sub- or para-human creatures called the Vodi. Once they've got it in for you, there's nothing you can do about it.

It's natural to ask whether this fantasy, a sort of poor man's Eumenides, which is finally exorcised (the book has a hopeful ending), adds anything of value. Certainly if you take it away, what remains is fairly commonplace contemporary fiction material: sex-starvation, poor old fathers messing about with tin-openers in lonely kitchens, flashy meals in opulent provincial hotels, car-snogging, Tizer, tinned peas: stock samples from a rather battered suitcase. The Vodi myth is intended to make all this more dramatic; it introduces an authentic note of terror and violence and loneliness; it gives Dick's struggle towards maturity more psychological reality, and this helps us to forget that the images which surround the myth, the problems of post-1945 adolescence, the local background, though competently presented, are never more than competent. Mr. Braine has tried to breathe a soul into a neat piece of engineering; I do not think he quite succeeds.

Eating People is Wrong is another provincial university saga. We've all read dozens by now, and this is not by any means one of the worst. But though occasionally amusing, the book seems pointless, laboured, and inadequately stocked. It is dangerous to assume that to have graduated in some branch of the humanities at a provincial university is in itself an adequate basis for a work of fiction.

Mr. Bradbury's book is well-peppered with would-be funny remarks like "a provincial university is just a modern version of the workhouse"; while imitation of *Lucky Jim* has now reached that point where one character actually refers to Mr. Amis while a professor wonders if an impossible guest from London is going to set his bedding alight "as in some novel he had once read." Other characters enquire of each other whether they are engaged in writing novels about provincial universities. We now only await the novel about the provincial university student who is writing a novel about a provincial university student who . . . , etc.

Mr. Bradbury does his best by offering us an endearing, muddled, bachelor professor-hero who falls over tea-trolleys and generally needs mothering; but his serious characters and their love-stories never come to life, and the most amusing chapters are the frankly farcical ones about a fashionable young London novelist whose technique for stealing books from railway bookstalls would seem to have distinct possibilities.

K. W. Gransden

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Ben Barzman

'Travellers from a twin earth, much more advanced than ours, come to see whether we are worth helping. Of course we aren't.' *New Statesman*

'An **ingenious** fantasy founded upon a **brilliant** idea'.
J. D. SCOTT, *Sunday Times*

'A romantic comedy of errors, with doubles arriving from outer space and tumbling into bed with the wrong lovers. It's all narrated with **spanking gusto**'.
PETER GREEN, *Daily Telegraph* 15s

Collins

Prohibited Immigrant
JOHN STONEHOUSE M.P.

"Mr Stonehouse has a deep understanding of African aspirations. His book may not be palatable to white supremacists but will be valuable to those who are searching for the truth." *Alan Paton* 21s

Pagan Spain
RICHARD WRIGHT

"The book has the power of fresh observation, the brightness of immediacy."
Observer 18s

BODLEY HEAD

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Television for schools

Plans for the school year 1960/61

School Programmes produced by Associated-Rediffusion Ltd., are intended to supplement the teacher's own work by using the resources of television to arouse the children's interest and show them aspects of school subjects which cannot easily be shown in the classroom. Teachers' Notes are supplied to over 1,000 registered schools to help with preparation and follow-up.

The Educational Advisory Council has approved plans for 1960/61 based on nearly 3 years' experience of School Television. Programmes will be provided for primary schools, secondary schools and VIth forms.

Innovations in the coming year will include an increase in the number of weekly programmes from four to six, with a repeat of each; variations in the length of programmes to suit the needs of different age-ranges and subjects; the introduction of new subjects, and a revision of past successes.

The following programmes will be produced:

FRENCH – A year's series of short weekly programmes in simple French for children in their second or third year of study of the language.

FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS – "The World Around Us", a year's miscellany series including science and general interest programmes.

GEOGRAPHY – For children of 12-15, a year's filmed series will illustrate the main geographical regions of the British Isles.

SCIENCE – A year's series for 14-year-olds on "The Story of Medicine".

ENGLISH – Another "Books to Enjoy" series designed to encourage children of about 12 to read more.

DRAMA – Two series for children over 13, one of which will encourage a more discriminating approach to popular drama.

FOR VITH FORMS – A discussion series on some of the great problems of today.

THE FARMING YEAR – A re-edited repeat of the 1957 series, for children of 9-14.

These programmes are available in the areas served by Associated-Rediffusion (London), ATV (Midlands), STV (Scotland), T W W. (South Wales and the West of England), Southern Television, T T T. (North East), Anglia Television (East Anglia), and Ulster (Northern Ireland).

Fuller information about plans for 1960/61 may be obtained from the Schools Information Office:—

ASSOCIATED-REDIFFUSION

Television House, Kingsway, W.C.2. HOLborn 7888

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LETTERS

T. S. Eliot Replies

I MUST apologise for the delay in addressing this letter to you, but I have only recently returned to England after an absence abroad of six weeks. I observe that in an article in your February issue the Provost of King's has a footnote reading as follows:

> It is worth noting that Eliot ever since *Ash Wednesday* has denied that the sexual act can be translated into the religious metaphor of redemption; and *The Cocktail Party* explicitly denies the power of sexual love to redeem. To-day such an assertion is unusual—and perhaps this explains why he has recently been attacked.

I have long ceased to feel astonishment at the interpretations which some readers have put upon my work, or at the assurance with which these interpreters profess to know my mind. If, however, I ignored Mr. Annan's assertions I might appear to be giving assent. I therefore wish to state that my views on the subject of sexual love, as embodied in *The Cocktail Party*, are widely different from those which he attributes to me. Incidentally, I am ignorant of the attacks which he says have recently been made upon me.

T. S. ELIOT

London

"The Future of the Left"

ANTHONY CROSLAND'S persuasive article "The Future of the Left" has not succeeded in persuading me completely. He is quite right in saying that all kinds of problems, apart from the problem of ownership, divide Left and Right in Britain, and I share his impatience with the blinkered attitude of many Labour Party members towards accepting "revisionism" in theory, when they have in fact accepted it in practice. Yet there is a certain core of truth in their attitude which should be recognised.

The core of truth is this. The values of our society, which determine so many of its unpleasing facets, are shaped by those who hold economic power. One has only to think of the advertising industry (based on big private business) and mass communications (as represented by privately-owned newspapers, magazines, and commercial television) to see the point. The great hope of socialists has always been that if the giant concentrations of economic power were submitted to public control, new values could be projected. Seen like this, public ownership is a crucial means to our ethical ends—and it is no good paying obeisance to the ends without having some idea of what are the means through which we propose to pursue them. That is why the traditionalists dislike all the emphasis being put on the ends; they fear that the distinctive social analysis which has characterised the socialist creed is being jettisoned, leaving us no different from liberals and other good folk who may share the same ethical ideals.

But the traditionalists go wrong on two points. They seem to believe that you have only to change the basis of ownership for all good things to flow. Experience surely shows that that is very wide of the mark. To get rid of private profit is like breaking down a wall; the way is opened to enter the garden beyond. But it doesn't follow that people will want to enter it, or that anyone yet knows how the paths into it ought to be constructed. "New values" do not automatically emerge; all that happens is that people go on judging public enterprise by the same old standards. "Is it efficient?" they continue to ask. "Does it make a profit?" (politely called a "surplus"). The problem which the traditionalists never touch is how in fact you establish the new "socialist" values.

New values are shaped only if there are persons or organisations willing to pioneer them. The humanitarian values on which our Welfare State is now based were pioneered by the great reformers of the 19th century—a time when attitudes towards the poor and derelict were harsh and condemnatory. Willingness to give economic aid to underdeveloped countries—undreamed of till after World War II—was pioneered by conscience-stricken anti-imperialists when no one would listen to them, until eventually it has become a major world preoccupation. The BBC has pioneered new values in entertainment—by no means without success. Public enterprise could introduce new values into industrial life as well, if it pioneered a different attitude towards work (as an activity through which men found self-expression, not a necessarily evil to be endured), and if it made an effort to give meaning to those will-o'-the-wisps "industrial democracy" and "public accountability." But these values will not take root simply as a result of an industry becoming "public"—they will have to be struggled for by men of vision long after the transfer of ownership has taken place.

The second error of the traditionalists is to concentrate too much on "ownership," whereas economic power rests to-day less and less with those who own, but with those who control economic resources, perhaps without owning them at all. That is why it is much more important for socialists to talk about the "public sector" which would include many things apart from ownership—notably public expenditure (and think of all that can be done with that!)—and not go on harping on public ownership alone.

There are thus two important problems for socialists—who controls economic power, and how to create new values. Mr. Crosland fails to recognise the significance of the first, and Mr. Crossman, in his reply, shows precious little concern with the second. For him, the decisive, culminating argument against socialist "revisionism," is that "the Communist countries are demonstrating with ever-increasing force the efficiency of nationalisation,"

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and he measures this efficiency "in terms of national security, scientific and technological development, popular education . . . even of mass living standards." These sound strangely akin to some of the old "capitalist values"; not even a murmur about freedom and all that freedom involves, no whisper of any more gracious way of life. What the Communists are doing, in terms of values, is to out-Americanise the Americans. Is this really the race in which socialists, also, want to compete? In spite of Crossman's assertion, we could then almost certainly compete better if we became outright Communists too.

RITA HINDEN

Socialist Commentary,
London

Bolshevism Revisited

MY PIECE in the January ENCOUNTER was an account of a trip to the Soviet Union, Poland, and Yugoslavia. It was not an exposition of my views of what the foreign policy of the West should be. Most of Mr. Lionel Bloch's guesses [in his letter in the April ENCOUNTER] as to the character of these views are wrong.

In my view, nothing would be more disastrous to the cause of peace than to permit the Communist world to achieve a clear margin of superiority in military power. The complacent policies of the American Government in the last seven years have already allowed Soviet Russia to gain a commanding lead in vital weapons categories. I have said repeatedly that, until we can get an international agreement on disarmament, we must redouble our efforts to maintain substantial military equality, in conventional forces as well as in the nuclear deterrent. The more the balance of military power tilts against us, the more the Communist world may be tempted to seek its purposes through pressure and blackmail, and the less likely it is that negotiations would produce just or lasting results. A balance of military force, in my judgment, is a necessary condition for constructive negotiations with the Soviet Union. Far from wishing the West to reduce its defence expenditure, as Mr. Bloch implies, I have consistently urged a larger defence budget for the United States.

The question between us—despite Mr. Bloch's attempts to make it appear otherwise—is not the posture of the West. The question between us is the feasibility of negotiation. Mr. Bloch says that nothing has changed. I say that something has changed—not a great deal, but something. It seems to me ridiculous to deny this. If anyone had told Mr. Bloch (or me) five years ago that by 1960 Vice-President Nixon would visit the Soviet Union, an American Fair would be opened in Moscow, and Prime Minister Khrushchev would visit the United States, we would have supposed this preposterous. We would have been wrong. For better or for worse, the Soviet Union is in flux. There *is* a diminution of internal terror. There *is* increased cultural ferment. There *is* an increased concern with raising consumer living standards. None of these changes guarantees to make the Soviet Union any less aggressive. Whether the direction in which the Soviet Union moves is for better or for worse depends a good deal, I think, on what we do. But let no one mistake the fact that the Soviet Union is moving.

There is a new period, and it is foolish to deny it. Of course the new period presents perils as well as opportunities. As I emphasised in ENCOUNTER, despite the improvements which have taken place since the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union remains a passionately ideological state, dogmatic, rigid, and impervious. The changes under Khrushchev, far from weakening the conviction of infallibility in Soviet leadership and policy, may well have strengthened it. The Soviet Union is not prepared to enter the world community on any basis of free circulation of people or ideas. Successful negotiations will not be a matter of nice words and long trips and cheering crowds. Entering international conferences clad only in a haze of good intentions is likely to lead to disaster.

Am I wrong in detecting in Mr. Bloch's remarks a fear that, if we abandon the Stalinist image of the Soviet Union, the West will lose all interest in maintaining its unity and strength? The argument that the West requires a situation of international tension because otherwise we will not do what ought to be done to preserve our power and vigilance—and that therefore we ought to pretend that there have been no changes in the Soviet Union from Stalin to Khrushchev—seems to me a confession of the moral and political bankruptcy of Western leadership which I am unwilling to make.

I believe that the West has more to gain than to lose by opening up the game. The most brilliant member of the American Foreign Service recently suggested to me the appropriate motto for American policy in this new phase: Act for the best, but prepare for the worst. Mr. Zilliacus would have us do only the first, Mr. Bloch only the second. Sensible policy requires that we do both.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.

Harvard University,
Cambridge, Mass.

Dandy

I INVARIABLY greet with pleasure the arrival of your magazine, whose taste and high quality I respect. Judge of my mingled horror and amusement when I saw on the back page of your February number an advertisement for Ellen Moers' *The Dandy*, with an engraving of Disraeli purported to be the work of an unknown artist named Alfred Croquis!

I reserve judgment on Messrs. Secker & Warburg, but I certainly think that a member of your staff should not have failed to redress this ludicrous error. Need I even mention that this drawing is the work of Alfred d'Orsay, the dandy *par excellence*, and that, in writing after "Alfred" the word "croquis," he was merely signifying that he had completed a "sketch"?

MARGARET DE LEEUW

New York City

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Your correspondent, Margaret De Leeuw, of New York, has a savage eye, critically untrained and therefore all the less discerning: it has led her into presumptuous and totally untenable error. The caption beneath our elegant lithograph advertisement in your February number is the plain truth, simple and exact: this exquisite line drawing was originally executed for *Fraser's Magazine* in 1833 by Alfred Croquis, *alias* Daniel Maclise (1806–70). It is one of three by the same hand to appear in our recently published book *The Dandy* by Ellen Moers, credit for its permissive use to The Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, where it is catalogued under the Dick Fund 1917 (Accession No. 17.3.756–1742) as "Author of *Vivian Grey* by Alfred Croquis."

This *nom-de-plume* is often confused with that of Alfred Crowquill, assumed by the Forrester Brothers in their contributions to magazines and periodicals, and in particular by the younger, more famous, Alfred Henry (1804–72) in *Hood's Own* and the early numbers of *Punch*. Seldom can confusion have been worse confused than in this instance. It does not need a microscope to discover that the signature reads "Alfred Croquis delt." Why, if it were a "sketch," should Croquis have a capital C? How account for *"delt,"* unless a modern Pegasus automation machine were to possess exceptionally gifted artistic impulses? What should have induced Alfred, Count d'Orsay, to sign this particular specimen, of a deft and delicate design far beyond his talent in execution, in so eccentric a fashion? He was scrupulous in signing a finished sketch in fullest detail, with his autograph, followed by *fecit* and the date, very often to the day of the month, as in "Byron/Genoa/mai 1823" and "Teresa Guiccioli/17 Oct. 1834." Furthermore, he employs the incisive, pointed capital A in his autograph and not the cursive, rounded majuscule of this portrait. That he thought highly of Maclise, whom he had first met in 1832, is patent in his letters to John Forster, who, incidentally, extols the artist in question in his *Life of Charles Dickens*.

Roger Senhouse

Secker & Warburg Ltd.
London

"The Anglo-Jewish Writer"

Brian Glanville's remarks on "The Anglo-Jewish Writer" [Encounter, February] remind me of a symposium conducted by an American publication, the *Contemporary Jewish Record*, some fifteen years ago. Leaders of American Jewry showed as much distress then as Anglo-Jewish leaders did on this more recent occasion. They concluded sadly that they had "lost a whole generation."

I do not have the symposium at hand, but I can remember a few representative statements. Lionel Trilling said that his Jewish identity was no more than "a point of honour" with him; if he could conceal his being Jewish, he would not. As for Jewish religion, he was sure that it was, in its latest variations, very modern and attractive, but it did not interest him; Alfred Kazin conceded the weight of the great Jews of history; the late Isaac Rosenfeld made "Jewish alienation" his principal theme. Muriel Rukeyser and a few others were "affirmative."

Still, the Jewish community had not lost this generation or even those writers who seemed most estranged. A few years later, Trilling was interpreting Wordsworth in the light of the rabbinical tradition and Kazin was writing a preface to the stories of Sholem Aleichem. These were rather diverse manifestations of Jewish identity, but the Jewish community of America tends to take what it can get. American Jews generally profess to take pride in their artists and intellectuals, although they may not understand or even care what their prodigies are up to. At the lowest level, this pride is like Leopold Bloom's pleasure in listing the famous Jews of history or like the formula of a children's book I have seen called *They Are All Jews*.

This concern for Jewish intellectuality has had its more sensible side as well. For many years, the B'nai B'rith has maintained its Hillel Foundations which have strengthened Jewish ties at the nation's universities and have entertained embryonic intellectuals on their premises. Also, Jewish organisations have supported magazines which stimulated serious Jewish writing (and published one of Trilling's essays on Wordsworth). In the 1920's, the *Menorah Journal* shared in an early "Jewish renaissance." In 1945, Elliot Cohen's *Commentary* succeeded the *Contemporary Jewish Record* and provided respectable payment for high-minded writing on Jewish (and other) subjects. This magazine's rather considerable subsidy has survived the recent death of its founding editor and occasional sniping from the pious right wing of the Jewish community. The success of *Commentary* no doubt helped to bring about the existence of *Midstream*, a quarterly sponsored by a Zionist organisation and devoted to publishing many of the same authors. *Commentary-Midstream* authors often appear also in the bi-weekly *Reconstructionist* and in the Labour Zionist monthly *Jewish Frontier*.

To chronicle these activities is to record the Jewish community's official interest in intellectuals and artists, but we cannot establish that American Jews have given these magazines the attention they deserve or that the magazines have fostered any significantly "Jewish school of writers." Jewish the writers certainly are, and they are a little more Jewish because *Commentary* and *Midstream* exist, but it is hard to say in what way. These writers constitute the "Jewish intellectual life" of which Mr. Glanville writes. Is their Jewishness solely an accident of birth? And what rôles can we assign to Dwight Macdonald, Mary McCarthy, and William Barrett, who belong equally to this group with Philip Rahv, Lionel Trilling, and Alfred Kazin? Perhaps raising such questions is a little like asking: "What kind of Armenian is Saroyan?" But one of the marks of Jewish literary criticism (we even have that in America) is to seek some principle of unity in Jewish self-expression. Certainly religion does not supply this unity. An interest in the Jewish faith has been stated or implied by Leslie Fiedler and Bernard Malamud but not by

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many others. Perhaps this unity, if it is to be found at all, lies in certain principles or practices of behaviour. I have tried to make my own contribution to this sort of investigation by assuming that East European Jewish life, transplanted to America, continues some of its old patterns. I have therefore sought, in certain writings of Saul Bellow and Bernard Malamud, some reflections of old-world Jewish life. In Nathanael West's "Lemuel Pitkin," in Daniel Fuchs' "Max Balkan," and in the *schlimazl* of Jewish tradition, I found the ancestors of Bellow's "Augie March." If the *schlimazl* went into the hat business, babies would be born without heads; and yet he is lordly and optimistic, always ranking himself with Abraham and Solomon, Montefiore and Rothschild. Most of Malamud's stories turn about a relationship drawn from Jewish tradition—an "unwelcome pairing," full of quarrelling, rejection, disputation, pursuit, persistence, and *noodging* (a sort of dogged wheedling).

Still, the first fact about Jewish writing in America is that it has followed the main patterns of American literature. (By the way, the best account of Jewish-American writing is Leslie Fiedler's in *Midstream*, not long ago.) Unlike Anglo-Jewish writing, it had the good fortune not to begin with an august founding father like Israel Zangwill but with a more modest writer, Abraham Cahan, whose *Rise of David Levinsky* presented a Jewish parallel to Dreiser's Frank Cowperwood. In the 1920's Ben Hecht and Ludwig Lewisohn employed Jewish exoticism as a weapon against Gentile Babbittry. In the 1930's, Jewish writers contributed to the literature of radical social criticism. Meyer Levin, Albert Halper, Michael Gold, and others portrayed America's Jews in heavy, naturalistic detail. We had a few exciting departures in that decade—Nathanael West (who wanted to write "social" novels but, fortunately, could not), Henry Roth (whose *Call It Sleep* is a remarkable chronicle of the life of a child in New York's Lower East Side), Daniel Fuchs (whose Max Balkan identifies himself with Tamburlaine), and Clifford Odets (who achieved a remarkable blending of pathos and irony in one play, *Awake and Sing*). Were there no British equivalents in the 1930's, either to the exceptions or the rule? I ask for information. I know of none, and Mr. Glanville does not mention any. Even granting the general paucity of Anglo-Jewish writers, this absence is itself a curiosity. Might it be related to the old anti-Semitic strain of British radicalism, a strain which H. G. Wells occasionally reflects? One recalls Grabstein, the Jewish financier of *The Dog beneath the Skin*, a broad caricature of a Jewish stereotype which seems still to have been widely current.

After commitment came disillusionment, and Delmore Schwartz, Isaac Rosenfeld, Saul Bellow, and Leslie Fiedler all began as intellectual historians of disillusionment with radical politics. Lionel Trilling's novel of radical politics, *The Middle of the Journey*, belongs here; Fiedler has noted its peculiar omission of Jewish characters—an omission which calls to mind Peter Shaffer's *Five Finger Exercise*. Britain has no equivalents for these writers. Instead, Britain's Gerald Kersh and P. Goldman seem to have been expressing a more hard-boiled disillusionment in the manner of America's Jerome Weidman and Budd Schulberg. Like Kersh, Weidman and Schulberg were accused of being "anti-Semitic" in *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* and *What Makes Sammy Run?* (Similar charges had, in the past, been made against Ben Hecht and, more surprisingly, Meyer Levin and Albert Halper.) But here is a peculiar difference: Kersh and Goldman direct their animosity against the older generation; Weidman and Schulberg find their targets in rising young *entrepreneurs*. Perhaps the easiest explanation can be made in Mr. Glanville's terms. The older generation is the enemy because it is the main obstacle to assimilation, an ideal which seems to be more frankly sought after in Britain than in America.

A few more Transatlantic pairings suggest themselves. Arnold Wesker seems to be Britain's long-delayed equivalent to the early Clifford Odets, but he comes at a time when politics has become more complex. I propose Wolf Mankowitz as a counterpart to Bernard Malamud. Both are profoundly sympathetic chroniclers of old-fashioned Jewish life, but Malamud has more control and more seriousness, Mankowitz is frankly an entertainer. As a counterpart to Philip Roth, I propose Brian Glanville. The two men are approximately the same age. Both have been accused of "anti-Semitism." Both arrive at the scene at the historical moment when Jewish tragedy arises out of Daddy's refusal to let Babs have the car and his insistence that her suitors have clean fingernails. But in *The Bankrupts*, Mr. Glanville is caught up in the pattern he describes in his essay, the violent assault upon the older generation. Roth is more casual and more comic. I find both parents and children more credible in Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus*, the parents a little less fallible, the children a little more fallible than in *The Bankrupts*. And, fortunately, Roth is not indicting a generation; he advocates a variety of rebellions against a variety of conformities.

In so doing, he surely reflects Mr. Glanville's thesis: American Jewish writers enjoy the advantage of a fuller, more complex subject.

HENRY POPKIN

Brandeis University,
Waltham, Mass.

NEITHER Mr. Litvinoff nor Mr. Glanville in his comments on Anglo-Jewish writing mentions the poetry of Isaac Rosenberg. It is true that Rosenberg, who was killed in the First World War at the age of twenty-seven, left much that is fragmentary, but there is enough achievement in his work to suggest that his talent was more mature than that of any other Anglo-Jewish writer who has so far appeared, and his Jewish consciousness is not less than that of any of the writers who have been mentioned.

Rosenberg's work both in language and conception is among the most strikingly original in English poetry in the 20th century, and although he has received surprisingly little critical attention, his vigorous influence is discernable in several English

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poets who have recently emerged. It may be an influence capable of much further development.

ARTHUR C. JACOBS

London

"Wreath for the Gamekeeper"

TEMPTING though it may be, I cannot pause to exchange mews and hisses with Mr. Aldington because he disapproves of what he thinks he sees in my "Wreath for the Gamekeeper" [ENCOUNTER, February]. It is fairly certain he shan't like it any better if he ever really reads it and finds out what I am talking about, and the point I wished to make. Maybe I should have done better to keep my original title, "A Defence of Obscenity." That might have given him a clue, and no amount of clues are too many for readers like Mr. Aldington.

It's too tedious a business to take on. Short of actionable slander I would never think of answering a hostile critic. I suggest, instead, to anyone who may be further interested in this question, to read first my "Wreath for the Gamekeeper" and then Mr. Aldington's "Wreath for Lawrence?" and see for himself whether at any point Mr. Aldington guessed even remotely what I meant.

As to my dishonesty in quoting letters from Lawrence not then published, anyone who remembers the cross-currents of gossip, newspaper interviews, friends quoting letters or citing from them in published articles, the perpetual merry-go-round of gossiping and quarrelling, in that little cenacle, knows that Lawrence's views on himself and everybody he knew were no secret to anyone who cared to listen or read. This is all I have to say about that. Remember, speaking of old soldiers, I was in the first campaign too.

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

Washington, D.C.

Oh, Mrs. Porter! What shall I do?
I started Lady Chatterley—now they've told me about you.
Send me the ENCOUNTER *as quickly as you can.*
Oh, Mrs. Porter, what a philistine I am!

BARBARA BARR

Streatham

[ED. NOTE:—*We take it that Mrs. Barr's dilemma about "starting" the novel is a bit of poetic licence; for Mrs. Barr is the daughter of Frieda von Richthofen, and the author in question was her stepfather.*]

D. H. LAWRENCE apparently brings out the very essence—the woman in Mrs. Porter, the philosopher in Richard Rees, the biographer in Richard Aldington. In the editors of our *Field and Stream* magazine here, the new edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* brought out the following (and I am sure it will interest your readers in both town and country):

> "Although written many years ago, this fictional account of the day-by-day life of an English gamekeeper is still of considerable interest to the outdoor-minded reader, as it contains many passages on pheasant-raising, the apprehending of poachers, ways to control vermin, and other duties of the professional gamekeeper. Unfortunately, one is obliged to wade through many pages of extraneous material in order to savour these sidelights on the management of a Midlands shooting-estate, and in this reviewer's opinion this book cannot take the place of J. R. Milner's *Practical Gamekeeper*."

S. M. BESSIE

New York City

"Beastly to the Germans"

IN "The Germans and the English" Terence Prittie has practically overbalanced in an effort to be fair to the other side. Therein lies the difference; it so seldom happens the other way round.

The blood-relationship theory just does not wash. The Saxons invaded these islands centuries ago. They mixed with the many races already here, then with those that came after, thereby producing the Englishman—for which the world should be truly thankful.

The barbarian German tribes that remained at home have spent the intervening years maintaining that racial purity of which they are inexplicably so proud; and more's the pity, as the world has found to its cost.

It is true that we cannot blame the new German generation for Belsen. However, there is no evidence that neighbouring races have been rushing to assist the Germans in their evolution (and who's to blame them), so under the circumstances it is hardly unfair for Britain to keep a wary eye on the future.

It is very true, as Mr. Prittie suggests, that the Germans feel shy towards the British; it is also very understandable. It is equally true that they cannot understand the "sly chuckle," the English accent, etc., etc. . . . H. G. Alexander requires the Germans to make the effort—this seems a particularly good idea.

MICHAEL BRANDT

London

I HAVE recently translated four talks by leading German personalities on various topics for the Third Programme, at the same time working on a translation of a well-known German author for an English publisher. Although almost every one of them irritated me at times, each of these five literary products showed, not a hypothetical and abstract "German," but five human beings, each on a different level of comprehension, thought, and feeling. To regard each or all with the cod-fishy negativeness displayed by Mr. Francis Williams would have

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been utterly absurd and pointless, in fact, unrealistic. His is, of course, the personal viewpoint shared by many of his generation, but personal views are never objective and therefore seldom just or true. As the daughter of a Civil Servant persecuted by the Nazis I have no wish or reason to defend the German folly which impoverished me. But looking back on the years spent in Berlin, *"en poste,"* the horror and apprehension, the boredom of one's official life, but also some of the best times I have known among civilised and cultured friends, I am struck by the silliness and laziness of thinking in slogans and, as it were, horizontally. Surely it is one of the more hopeful signs of our times that we have resumed thinking vertically and with the subtlety which is a legacy of western civilisation.

Without a sense of scale nothing can be understood. Men are not equal; they exist in scale. There are no "Germans," "Jews," or "Negroes" to condemn, only better or worse developed individual human beings. But without seeing scale within himself a man will neither know nor care for this difference. His thinking will be gross, like a newspaper slogan, and as literal and dead as a Communist one. The "sheer necessity of better Anglo-German relations," political and economic, is a secondary consideration. Much more important it is to purify the heart and motives, and to react to a meanness of heart which threatens to encroach on people's lives, like some cancerous growth.

CONSTANCE MCNAB

London

Sancta Clause

MR. CROSSMAN'S *limitations as a political thinker have seldom been more clearly exposed than they are in the article on Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution which he has written for the April number of* ENCOUNTER*—an article dashed off, it is charitable to assume, in some haste, as a counterblast to Anthony Crosland's defence of revisionism in the previous issue.*

Clause 4, Mr. Crossman believes, has nothing the matter with it, even by revisionist standards. At Blackpool Mr. Gaitskell called upon the party to distinguish ends from means; but is not this what Clause 4 does? It reads:

> *To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.*

—and doesn't this, Mr. Crossman asks, distinguish the end (equitable distribution) from the means (the organisation of the economy to achieve it)?

This is ingenious interpretative sophistry, and if everybody in the Labour Party had agreed to accept it years ago the struggle over Clause 4 need not have arisen. But it is a game that two can play. The crucial phrase about means in Clause 4 is, surely, "the best obtainable system of popular administration and control." Mr. Crossman condemns it as vague: but at least, he says, it "rejects as non-Socialist the kind of nationalised Board, responsible neither to Parliament nor to its workers, which was set up by the Attlee Government."

Does it? On the contrary, it deliberately, through the use of the term "popular," encourages the electorate to decide what kind *of control it wishes to be exercised over industry on the community's behalf. And the electorate has demonstrated in successive elections that it does* not *want industry directly responsible to Parliament or to its workers; for the good reason that the electorate has no confidence at all in the ability of either Parliament or any syndicalist system to run or to supervise industry.*

Parliament has never shown itself efficient in this capacity; whatever the faults of the nationalised boards, nobody is seriously going to suggest they are more bureaucratic, more incompetent, or more resistant to public opinion than, say, the Post Office. And now that the House of Commons is run not by its members but by two interlocking party cabals, it has become so ineffective as an instrument for reflecting public opinion that any idea of it as representative of the community is laughable. The boards which Mr. Crossman despises actually move closer to public opinion the further they are removed from State supervision. The BBC is a good example: improvements in its political and social services to its viewers have been most marked since (with the assistance of commercial television) it got the party whips off its back.

The lesson which Socialists ought to have learned from the last few years is that popular *control is sometimes best exercised by the removal of* State *control. Not always, admittedly—the State has to intervene, in some cases, even where it would prefer to wash its hands of the whole difficult business: transport, for example. But few members of the Labour Party can now believe that "the best obtainable system of popular administration" is necessarily administration by the State—certainly not Mr. Crossman, for it strains credulity too far to believe that he would get quite so much space to air his opinions if Lords Beaverbrook, Rothermere, and the rest had been compulsorily retired to make way for English equivalents of* Izvestia *and* Pravda. *Nobody is going to suggest that either private enterprise or State boards is the best mankind will ever do to secure fair and efficient distribution: but at least they are fairer, and a lot more popular, than the alternative which the Left wants to persuade us to put in their place.*

THE SPECTATOR, *March 18*

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"The Trial Begins . . ."

It is a little difficult to see any point in the title "The Trial Begins . . ." which Mr. Max Hayward has given to Abram Tertz' short story. The Russian title which you print on your cover is "sud idyot." In some contexts this could perhaps bear the meaning "the trial begins," but out of context it might more naturally be translated "the trial is in progress" or even "the trial has begun."

This would make good sense in connection with the passage on page 30: "Look through the window. . . . That's where they are, the people who are on trial. See how many of them there are? . . . You're different now, my boy. You're not on trial, you're condemned."

Oliver Miles

Merton College,
Oxford

[Max Hayward writes: *I am not myself happy enough about "The Trial Begins" to attempt more than a half-hearted defence. It was originally only a "working" title, which, for technical reasons, it would have been difficult to change after the story went to the printers. It can, however, be defended as a reasonably accurate paraphrase of* "sud idyot" *which is actually a traditional Russian formula for announcing the entry of the judge and his assistants into the courtroom and means literally "the court is coming." Legal experts I consulted told me there is no equivalent formula in English. The phrase occurs twice in the text where I have rendered it as "the court is in session."*]

"Out of Africa"

I am grateful to Mr. Mphahlele for his serious and thoughtful reply [April] to my article in the October Encounter. However, I must say that I feel that Mr. Mphahlele has been less than fair to me when he asserts that by the use of a single quotation from Hannah Arendt I tried to "prove" that "it is idle" for people to expect "a spurt of literary activity" from Africa. I used the quotation as part of an argument much more extended than one could gather from Mr. Mphahlele's brusque summary of it; and the phrases I have put between inverted commas are Mr. Mphahlele's, not my own. But readers who are interested will be able to find my argument in the relevant issue of Encounter; and rather than recapitulate it here, it seems to me that it would be more useful for me to comment, very briefly, on a couple of the points raised by Mr. Mphahlele.

"What more human reality," Mr. Mphahlele asks, "does one need than that people have socially and politically organised lives?" Obviously there can be no answer to this question, when it is stated without qualification: but I would remind Mr. Mphahlele that I was trying to confine the discussion in my article to the single topic of what the prospects were for the emergence of a literature from Africa. And within that context it does not seem to me unreasonable to say that a "human reality" which includes, for example, an immensely long and varied written tradition, formal institutions of great antiquity and complexity, cities whose very names resound with the tumult and silence of an achieved past—that such a "reality" is a *help*, to put it no higher, in the creation of a literature, and its absence is a handicap. All this is not merely a matter of an "advanced technology"; still less is it a matter of "stocks and shares" or "gadgets," and from the evidence of the rest of his reply I would say that this is something Mr. Mphahlele very well realises.

To speak in this way is not to make any great claims on behalf of Western culture; I could draw up an indictment against it as bitter, and on grounds as personal, as any Mr. Mphahlele might put forward. (*Not* that I believe Mr. Mphahlele is any more interested than I am in doing any such thing.) But I make the remark because it leads on to the last point—or the last question—which I wish to ask Mr. Mphahlele. Does he believe that he is serving the truth about himself, his people, or the rest of us, when he states that the African is the product of "an order that could only generate life and never destroy or corrode it"? In any society, life is always being generated and destroyed by the forces within that society: the struggle is one from which no group of people ever has been, or ever will be, immune. To claim to have been immune is to deny one's full humanity, not to assert it.

Dan Jacobson

Kimberley,
South Africa

venture

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Editor: SYED ALI ASHRAF, Head of the Department of English, Karachi University, assisted by an international Advisory Board. The first issue of the quarterly has already been published. The second issue is coming out on April 25th. Price: 3s. 6d. a copy.

They contain: Articles on Literature and Teaching of English as a foreign language; Translation of poems by Lee Hou-Chu (10th century Chinese Lyricist); Poems; "The Orient in English Literature" (a regular feature-article); A select list of books published in 1959; Book Reviews, etc.

Among the contributors to the first and second issues are:
T. A. Richards; Joseph T. Shipley; Joshua Whatmough; A. Norman Jeffares; Harold Orton; A. S. Hornby; Norman Denison; Shahid Suhrawardy; M. A. Seljouk.

Available at English Department, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan.

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AUTHORS

Dennis Gabor *writes:* "I was born in Budapest (midway between Michael Polanyi and Edward Teller). Like so many of my generation, I was brought up in fervent adoration of learning and soon developed a passion for physics. Like many in my generation of 'worshippers of the West,' I got only as near to it as Weimar Germany in the first step, and had it not been for Hitler I probably would never have got any further. This ill-wind blew well for me. I found a place as an electrical engineer in English industry where I remained until 1948. At the ripe age of 48 I found my way at last into academic life, at the University of London. By that time I had written some thirty papers, also a little book on the Electron Microscope, and filed some thirty patents. In ten happy years at the Imperial College I doubled the number of my papers and inventions. In 1956 I was elected into the Royal Society, and in 1958 I became the first holder of the Chair of Applied Electron Physics. . . ."

Murray Sayle *writes*: "I arrived in England to break into the big-time in Fleet Street. I failed. I tried to get into the international goodwill game in Paris. My heart wasn't in it. Back in London, I took to a more leisurely kind of writing, and I now have a novel, called *A Crooked Sixpence*, coming out with MacGibbon & Kee in May. The same firm will include my ENCOUNTER essay in an anthology of other expatriates' (including Dan Jacobson from South Africa, Doris Lessing from Rhodesia, Victor Anant from India, Merrill Ferguson from the West Indies, and Brian Behan from Ireland) entitled *Alienation*, which is due to appear shortly. . . ."

David Sylvester whose writing has often appeared in ENCOUNTER, has recently been writing art criticism for the *New Statesman*. At the moment he is travelling in the United States.

Michael Anthony is a twenty-seven-year-old West Indian writer who for the past five years has been working in England. "Sandra Street" is the first of his stories to be published here, although several of them have already been broadcast by the BBC. He is at present working on a novel which he hopes to complete soon, and another story of his will appear in an anthology of West Indian stories which Faber & Faber are bringing out in the autumn.

Mark Abrams is the director of the London Press Exchange which specialises in sociological "market research." He is the author of several dozen monographs on the changing structure of British society, and has an international reputation as one of the leading analysts of opinion polls. Several years ago he published a book, *Social Surveys and Social Action* (Heinemann, 1957).

Has China got the Bomb?

By mid 1959 "militarily the Chinese were still dependent on a Soviet nuclear deterrent, and it was as yet far from clear to what extent Moscow would use this deterrent to forward China's political objective . . . (The) discrepancy between China's political objectives and her military means must have awakened the leadership to the harmful effects of the division within the Chinese military. These divisions came under two major headings. On the one hand was the conflict between the professional military and the party . . . On the other hand there was a growing problem between the party and the rank and file of the army . . ."

Alice Langley Hsieh analyses the impact of the concepts of nuclear warfare upon the top military leadership in China in the second issue of THE CHINA QUARTERLY. Other contributors include H. F. Schurmann on Organisational Principles and Hugh Howes on Radio as a Propaganda Weapon as well as Karl A. Wittfogel and Benjamin Schwartz in the final part of their debate on Chinese Communist history.

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THE CHINA QUARTERLY

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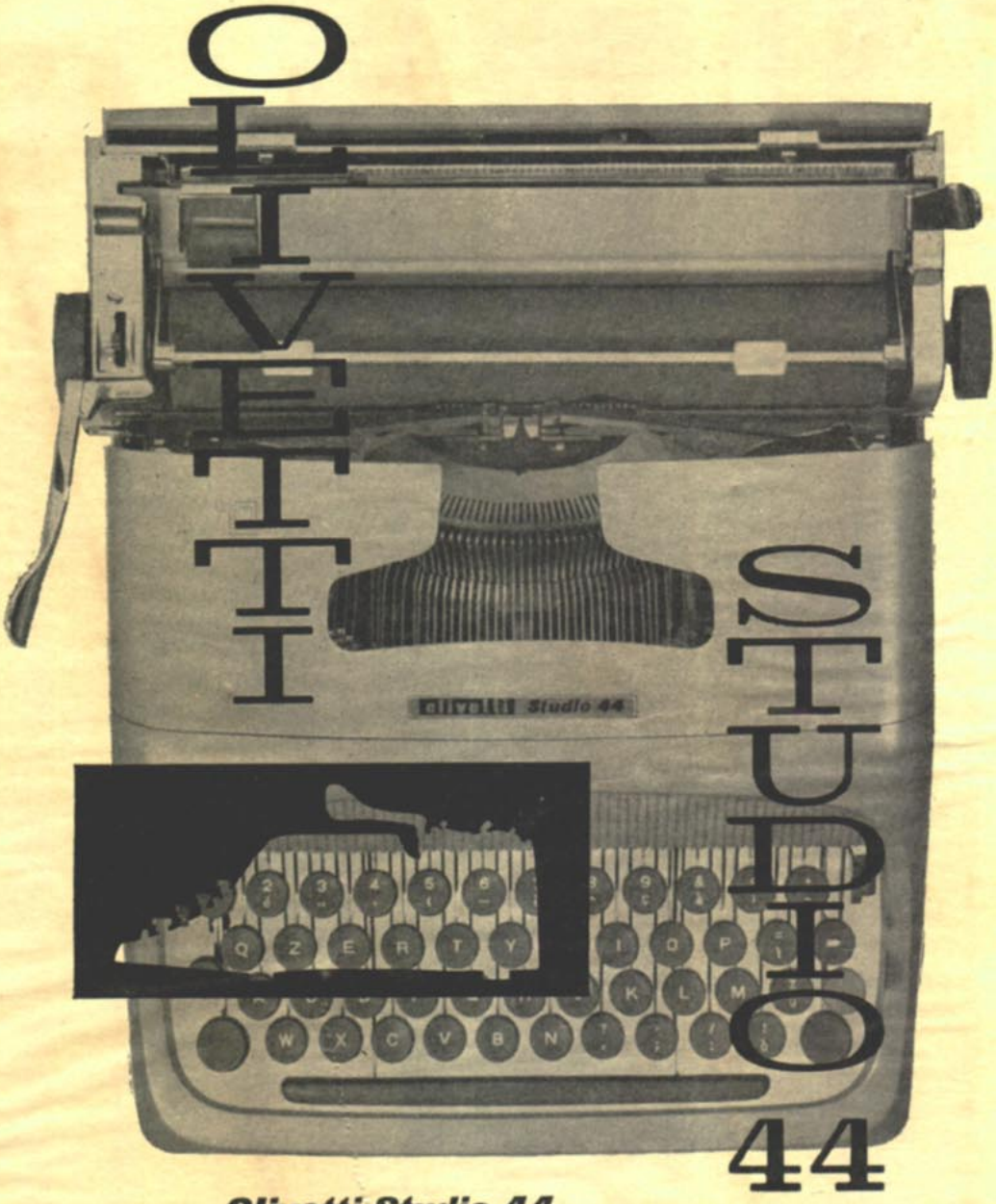

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